



# HEROES OF THE PLAINS OR

LIFE AND WONDERFUL ADVENTURES

## OF WILD BILL, BUFFALO BILL

AND EXPLOITS OF

GEN. CUSTER,

KIT CARSON,

CALIFORNIA JOE,

CAPT JACK,

CAPT D.L. PAYNE,

&c., &c., &c.

BUEL.

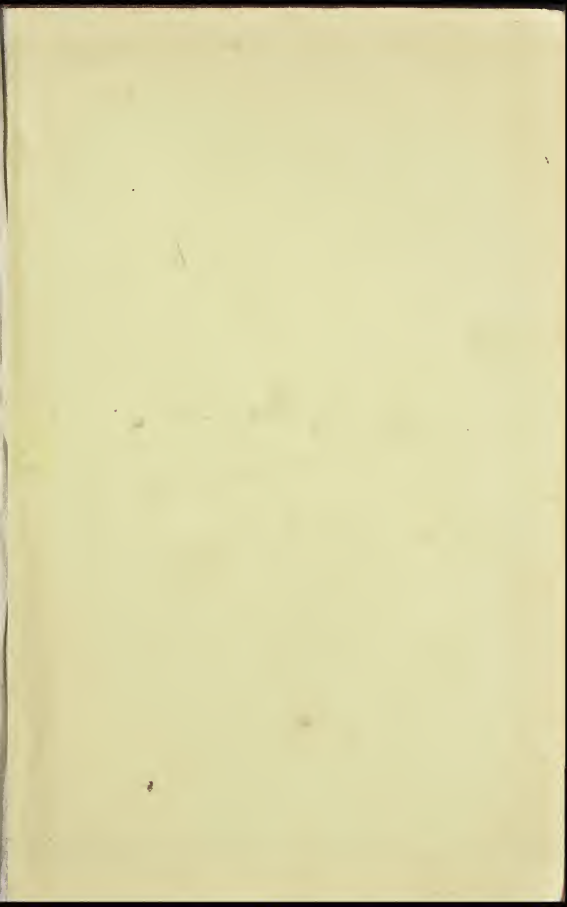
Graff

The Newberry Library

The Everett D. Graff Collection  
of Western Americana

467

S. W. Parker











# HEROES OF THE PLAINS

OR

## Lives and Wonderful Adventures

OF

WILD BILL, BUFFALO BILL, KIT CARSON,  
CAPT. PAYNE, CAPT. JACK, TEXAS  
JACK, CALIFORNIA JOE,

AND OTHER

CELEBRATED INDIAN FIGHTERS, SCOUTS, HUNTERS AND GUIDES

INCLUDING

A TRUE AND THRILLING HISTORY OF GEN. CUSTER'S FAMOUS  
"LAST FIGHT" ON THE LITTLE BIG HORN,  
WITH SITTING BULL.

BY J. W. BUEL,

Author of "Border Outlaws," "Legends of the Ozarks," and other popular works.

---

*PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.*

---

ST. LOUIS, MO.:

N. D. THOMPSON & CO.,

1881.

---

Copyrighted, 1881, by W. S. BRYAN.

---



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

---

THE work of preparing a brief history of the greatest of plains-heroes has been one of especial pleasure to me, although at times many obstacles interposed themselves which only perseverance could remove. But the labor, nevertheless, has afforded me no little enjoyment, as it brought to my immediate consideration deeds of prowess, cunning and endurance, putting to a test the measure of man's possibilities in a particular field of action. It is our natural disposition to admire true heroes, and not only to admire, but to exalt their acts, and this universal feeling, perhaps exaggerated in myself, was one of the motives which impelled me into a preparation of "HEROES OF THE PLAINS." While this volume abounds with thrilling adventures, sanguinary encounters and personal combats of the most startling character, yet through every page there is observed a thread of wholesome justice, upon which is strung every deed recounted, preserving a forcible and moral influence beneficial to young and old alike.

In compiling these personal histories I have adhered strictly to facts without florid coloring. I was well acquainted with Wild Bill for several years before his death, and in 1879 wrote a pamphlet sketch of his life, but discovered afterward that while it contained comparatively few of his adventures, there were several mortifying er-

rors, a correction of which influenced me to write another sketch of the famous scout, and this labor developed into "HEROES OF THE PLAINS." I was fortunate in securing Wild Bill's diary from his widow, Mrs. Agnes Lake Hickok, of Cincinnati, from which I have drawn my facts concerning him, that there might be no mistakes or omissions in recounting the marvelous exploits of his life in this publication.

Buffalo Bill, who now stands unchallenged as the greatest plainsman living, was an intimate friend of Wild Bill, and the two, so long connected in their wonderful careers, deserve a conjunctive position in history, such as I have here given them.

The other heroes, Kit Carson, Capt. Jack, Gen. Custer, Capt. Payne, California Joe, and Texas Jack, have each made their private mark over the wild expanse of Western wilderness, in the highway they so ably assisted in preparing for civilization and its peaceful pursuits: teeming harvests, happy homes, the building of cities, extension of commerce and all attendant blessings. They fought the fight whose victory has moved the center of wealth and population Westward, and therefore deserve the exultant recognition of every American whose patriotism extends from the heart to the soil of his nativity.

J. W. B.

ST. LOUIS, August 1, 1881.

# ILLUSTRATIONS.

ILLUMINATED TITLE.	PAGE.
A Ride for Life,	19
J. B. Hickok (Wild Bill),	20
Wild Bill's Birth Place,	22
Disembarking in a Kansas Mob,	27
Wild Bill Driving into Santa Fe,	31
Wild Bill and his Men Charging the Indian Camp,	35
WILD BILL AND THE CINNAMON BEAR,	39
WILD BILL'S FIGHT WITH THE McCANDLAS GANG,	45
A Close Shave,	56
Wild Bill in Disguise,	67
Wild Bill Surprises the Sleepy Sentinel,	71
Man-to yu kee (Conquering Bear),	77
WILD BILL'S DUEL WITH CONQUERING BEAR,	83
Wild Bill and Mrs. Rogers in the Park,	89
Wild Bill Satisfies the Natives,	94
A Duel with Four Men,	97
WILD BILL KILLING BLACK KETTLE,	101
Scenery on the Route Traveled by the Wilson Party,	109
The Principal Amusement at Hays City,	111
WILD BILL'S FIGHT WITH FIFTEEN SOLDIERS,	119
The Aboriginal Part of the Outfit,	129
The Bear and the Sausages,	131
A Street in Abilene,	134
Wild Bill Accidentally Kills a Friend,	136
A "Rough" on his way to the Lock-up,	154
PUNISHING A BOGUS CHARACTER,	165
The Cabin in the Black Hills,	171
Wild Bill and the Fox,	173
Taking Desperate Chances,	177
Wild Bill's Miraculous Escape from the Indians,	179
Deadwood in Embryo,	186
ASSASSINATION OF WILD BILL,	189
Execution of Jack McCall,	205
Wild Bill's Grave,	209
Gen. Forsyth and his Beleaguered Scouts,	222
Hon. Wm. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill),	224
Stabbing of Buffalo Bill's Father,	230
Battle of Ash Hollow,	245
The Attack on the Stage Coach,	267
Inside the Robbers' Dug Out,	271
BUFFALO BILL WINS THE CHAMPIONSHIP,	297
AMBUSHING THE INDIANS,	303

"Hi-yi-yip-yah"—The Attack, - - - -	313
Beaver Creek, the Trapper's Elysian, - - - -	317
BUFFALO BILL IN CLOSE QUARTERS, - - - -	322
Buffalo Bill Tries a Shot at Long Range, - - - -	329
Major Frank North, - - - -	332
Silver Bricks Awaiting Shipment, - - - -	336
Death of Tall Bull, - - - -	344
Two Indians at One Shot, - - - -	347
The Marriage Ceremony, - - - -	353
"How! How!" - - - -	356
The Grand Duke's First Buffalo, - - - -	358
Residence of Hon. W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) at North Platte, Neb., - - - -	374
Brevet Major-Gen. Geo. A. Custer, - - - -	377
Gen. Custer's Interpreter Addressing the Assembled Sioux, - - - -	380
DEATH OF GENERAL CUSTER, - - - -	389
The Monument where Custer Fell, - - - -	392
BUFFALO BILL'S DUEL WITH YELLOW HAND, - - - -	397
A Shot that Beat William Tell's, - - - -	407
California Joe, - - - -	418
CALIFORNIA JOE AT THE STAKE, - - - -	423
The Indians Receiving the White Girl into their Canoe, - - - -	435
CALIFORNIA JOE ATTACKED BY A PANTHER, - - - -	446
California Joe Saves his Friend, - - - -	448
"Ugh! White Man," - - - -	451
Kit Carson and his Blind Horse, - - - -	458
Kit Carson Employed as a Horse Tamer, - - - -	463
Treud by a Hungry Grizzly, - - - -	472
Hunting the Trail, - - - -	474
Carson's Duel with the Frenchman, - - - -	478
Kit Carson Saves his Fallen Comrade, - - - -	481
Carson's Fight with a Mexican Lion, - - - -	483
Kit Carson's Indian Wife, - - - -	484
Carson and the Wounded Buffalo, - - - -	489
Scene in Taos, N. M., - - - -	494
Capt. D. L. Payne, - - - -	498
THE MURDER OF MRS. BLINN, - - - -	509
Marching Through the Snow, - - - -	512
Departure of the Cheyennes, - - - -	517
A Cheyenne Warrior, - - - -	525
Colonel Coppinger Visits the Camp, - - - -	529
Drilling the Colonists, - - - -	532
Capt. Jack, the Poet Scout, - - - -	534
Oura, - - - -	539
Texas Jack, - - - -	542
Jack Holding the Indians at Bay, - - - -	545
Flagging Antelope, - - - -	547



# CONTENTS.

## LIFE OF WILD BILL.

	PAGE.
CHAPTER I.—Birth—Family History—Early Life—Youthful Hunting Adventures—Desperate Fight on a Towpath—Leaves Home to take part in the Kansas War—Receives the Title of "Shanghai Bill"—Lively Times in Kansas,	21—30
CHAPTER II.—Stage Driving across the Plains—Trouble with the Indians—Bill Leads an Expedition against them—Desperate Fight and Brilliant Victory—Freighting to New Mexico—Terrific Fight with a Cinnamon Bear—Bill Cleans out the McCandlas Gang at Rock Creek, and wins the Title of "Wild Bill,"	30—50
CHAPTER III.—Wild Bill Enlists in the Union Army—Remarkable Shooting at Pea Ridge—Becomes a Spy for General Curtis—Makes his way to the Confederates and becomes an Orderly to Gen. Price—Desperate Adventure with Jake Lawson—A Ride for Life—An Unprofitable Horse Race,	50—63
CHAPTER IV.—Wild Bill again enters the Confederate Lines—Humorous Adventure with an Old Darkey—Assumes the role of an Arkansaw Traveler—Is Detected and Condemned to be Shot—Escapes by Killing his Guard,	63—72
CHAPTER V.—Bill Declines longer to serve as a Spy—Remarkable Adventure with Three Bushwhackers—Black Nell—Bowie-Knife Duel with Conquering Bear,	72—85
CHAPTER VI.—Mary Logan, the Beautiful Indian Girl—Her Singular Infatuation for Wild Bill—The Romance of Love—Mary Logan Poisons her Husband and Disappears Forever—Duel with Dave Tutt, in which Bill "Satisfies the Natives,"	86—95
CHAPTER VII.—Wild Bill Fights a Duel with Four Men—Expedition Against Black Kettle—Desperate Battle on the Wachita—Bill Kills Black Kettle,	96—103
CHAPTER VIII.—Wild Bill Visits Chicago—Some Roughs try to Tame him—Ignominious Failure of the Attempt—Bill Receives a Letter from Vice-President Wilson—Serves as Guide for the Vice-President's Party, and is Presented with a Pair of Ivory-Handled Pistols—Bill is Elected Marshal of Hays City,	103—112
13	

- CHAPTER IX.—Jack Strawhan's Fatal Mistake—Bill Mulvey undertakes to "Run the Town"—But Runs against Wild Bill's Pistol—Desperate Fight with 16 Soldiers, - 113—124
- CHAPTER X.—Wild Bill's Buffalo Speculation—Captures a Herd of Wild Buffaloes and Exhibits them at Niagara—Result, Bankruptcy—Bill becomes Marshal of Abilene, Kan.—Fatal Row with Phil Cole—Wild Bill and the Professor of Pugilism, - - - - - 124—139
- CHAPTER XI.—\$5,000 offered for Wild Bill's Heart—Eight Texas Desperadoes Accept the Offer, but fail to Deliver the Goods—Death of Bill Thompson—Wild Bill Kills and Scalps Phil Cole's Cousin, - - - - - 140—149
- CHAPTER XII.—Mrs. Lake Finds a Champion in Wild Bill—Who Makes a Speech in her Favor—Bill Visits Kansas City—Description of that Place in its Early Days—Bill Tames a Rash Young Man, - - - - - 150—156
- CHAPTER XIII.—Wild Bill as an Actor—The Tricks he played on the "Supes"—Settles a Crowd of Roughts, who were Spoiling to Fight the entire Combination—Adventure with a Party of Merchants at Portland, Maine—Wild Bill makes a Decided Hit—Cleans out a Bogus Theatrical Troupe for using his Name without Authority—Goes West again—Is Attacked by Two Villains and Kills them Both, - 156—169
- CHAPTER XIV.—Expedition to the Black Hills—Adventure with the Silver Grey Fox—Bill's Companions Attacked and Killed by Indians—His own Marvelous Adventures and Final Escape, - - - - - 170—180
- CHAPTER XV.—Wild Bill Accidentally meets Mrs. Lake—Proposes Marriage, is Accepted, and the Wedding takes place—Pleasant Visit to Cincinnati—Sketch of Mrs. Lake and her Daughter Emma, - - - - - 180—185
- CHAPTER XVI.—Bill's Last Expedition to the Black Hills—Affectionate Letter to his Wife—Assassination of Wild Bill by Jack McCall, - - - - - 185—192
- CHAPTER XVII.—The Murderer's Trial and Acquittal, - 192—198
- CHAPTER XVIII.—Funeral of Wild Bill—California Joe's Warning to the Murderer—Capt. Jack's Poem on the Burial of Wild Bill, - - - - - 198—203
- CHAPTER XIX.—Second Trial of Jack McCall—His Conviction and Execution—Pathetic Letter from his Sister, - 203—207
- CHAPTER XX.—Removal of Wild Bill's Remains, which are found to be Petrified—"Wild Bill's Grave"—Peculiarities of the Great Scout—His Love for Black Nell—His Wonderful Dexterity in the use of Fire Arms—Gen. Custer's Opinion of Wild Bill, - - - - - 207—221

## LIFE OF BUFFALO BILL.

- CHAPTER I.—Birth and Early Life—Experiences with Mormons and Frontier Characters—The Kansas Troubles—Attempted Assassination of Billy's Father—Billy Rescues his Father from a Mob—Attempt to Blow up the Cody Residence with Powder, - - - - - 225—234
- CHAPTER II.—Billy runs away from Home to become a Herder—Returns with his Pockets full of Silver, which he gives to his Mother—Goes to School—His First Sweetheart—Fight with his Rival—"I'm killed! I'm killed!"—Billy again Leaves Home to Escape Imaginary Dangers—Is Followed by his Rival's Father—But Escapes his Fury—Death of the Elder Mr. Cody—Billy's Efforts to Help his Mother—His First Fight with Indians—The Retreat—Billy Slays the "Biggest Indian in the Outfit"—Returns Home to Find himself Famous, - - - - - 234—242
- CHAPTER III.—Billy "Goes West" again—Description of Overland Freighting—A Singular Obligation—"Bull-Whackers" and "Cow-Boys"—The Camp Wrecked by a Buffalo Stampede—Captured by Mormons—Who Rob the Train, but Release the Men—Perilous March across the Plains—Desperate Fight with Indians—Billy Shoots a Warrior at Long Range—The Rescue—Trapping—Camping in a Grave Yard, - - - - - 243—253
- CHAPTER IV.—"Pike's Peak or Bust"—"Busted"—The Return—Adventures on a Raft—Billy becomes a "Pony Express" Rider, - - - - - 254—257
- CHAPTER V.—Billy and Dave Harrington as Trappers—The Accident—Alone on the Prairie—Visited by Indians—Twenty-Nine Days of Lonely Suffering—Help at Last—The Return—Death of Noble Dave Harrington, - - - - - 257—263
- CHAPTER VI.—Stage Driving—Narrow Escape from Massacre—Battle of Clear Creek, - - - - - 264—269
- CHAPTER VII.—Billy's Adventure with the Robbers—Kills one of the Band and Escapes by Shrewd Strategy, - - - - - 269—275
- CHAPTER VIII.—The Great Civil War—"Red Legs" and "Border Ruffians"—Billy's Service as a Soldier and Scout—Adventure in Southern Missouri, - - - - - 275—280
- CHAPTER IX.—Close of the War—Billy falls in Love and is Married—Wedding Trip to Kansas—The Boat Attacked by Bushwhackers—Ovation at Leavenworth—Housekeeping—Scouting for Gen. Custer, - - - - - 280—285

CHAPTER X.—The "Colored Troops" fail to Fight Nobly—But Unlimber Themselves and "Light Out"—Saved by the Darkness—A Town Speculation—Rome "Howls"—Dr. Webb and his Little Scheme—Rome does not prove to be an Eternal City—Buffalo Hunting—Cody Wins the Title of "Buffalo Bill,"	285—291
CHAPTER XI.—The Great Buffalo Hunting Contest—Numerous Visitors—Great Excitement—Magnificent Display of Skill in Riding and Shooting—Buffalo Bill Wins the Stakes,	292—299
CHAPTER XII.—Bill is Captured by Indians—But Escapes through Strategy and the Fleetness of his Mule—The Ambush—Marvelous Riding as a Dispatch Carrier—The "Government Mule,"	299—311
CHAPTER XIII.—Gen. Forsythe's Desperate Battle with the Indians—Buffalo Bill as Scout and Hunter—Drives a Herd of Buffaloes into Camp and Kills them—Fighting Indians—Close Quarters,	311—320
CHAPTER XIV.—The Battle with Black Kettle's Band—Pursuit of Horse Thieves—"Throw up your Hands, or I'll Kill You,"	320—327
CHAPTER XV.—Buffalo Bill Kills an Indian at Long Range—Major North and his Pawnees—Numerous Indian Fights,	328—339
CHAPTER XVI.—Scouts and Battles—Buffalo Bill shoots Tall Bull—Camp Life,	339—345
CHAPTER XVII.—Buffalo Bill's Wonderful Horsemanship—He Kills Two Indians at One Shot—The Pawnee Sentinel—Buffalo Bill as a 'Squire—A New Way to "Replevin" a Stolen Horse—The Wedding Ceremony,	345—353
CHAPTER XVIII.—Buffalo Bill Serves as Guide for Distinguished Hunting Parties—The Duke Alexis—Spotted Tail and his Indians—The Duke Kills his First Buffalo—Bill Treats him to a "Western Stage Drive"—Buffalo Bill Visits New York on the Invitation of Prominent Citizens—Another Brush with the Indians,	354—363
CHAPTER XIX.—Buffalo Bill is Elected a Member of the Legislature—Ned Buntline Makes him an Offer to go on the Stage—Bill and Texas Jack Learning their Parts—Splendid Success,	363—372
CHAPTER XX.—Acting and Scouting—Death of Little Kit—Preparations for the Little Big Horn Expedition,	373—382
CHAPTER XXI.—History of the Unfortunate Expedition to the Little Big Horn—Custer's Last Fight and Death,	382—393
CHAPTER XXII.—Buffalo Bill's Duel with Yellow Hand—"The First Scalp for Custer,"	393—399

- CHAPTER XXIII.—Scouting on a Steamboat—The Bad Lands—  
 Marvelous Ride and Narrow Escape—Viewing an Indian  
 Buffalo Hunt from Ambush—A Bridle of Indian Scalps—  
 Success on the Stage—\$48,000 Cleared in One Season—A  
 Shot that Beat William Tell's, - - - 400—408
- CHAPTER XXIV.—The Author visits Buffalo Bill—The Famous  
 Scout's Home and Family—His Great Popularity at Home  
 —Wonderful Riding and Shooting—Buffalo Bill's Liberal-  
 ity—A Humorous Incident at Church—An Indian's Con-  
 tempt for a Watch—Other Incidents and Anecdotes, 408—416

## LIFE OF CALIFORNIA JOE.

- CHAPTER I.—Who was California Joe?—The Mystery that En-  
 shrouded him—The Indian Massacre—Captured and Con-  
 demned to the Stake—Rescued by a Party of Trappers  
 after the Fire is Kindled, - - - 419—425
- CHAPTER II.—A Romance of Love—Capt. Jack's Poem—Joe  
 Rescues Hazel Eye, - - - 425—436
- CHAPTER III.—Service as Scout During the War—Scouting on  
 the Plains—Gen. Custer's Description of California Joe—  
 "An Ambulance Man er a Hoss Man"—Silent Jack Corbin  
 —Joe and Jack's Ride—A Bear Hunt—Ambushing the  
 Indians—"Boys, you kin hev the Fixtures, but the Scalps  
 are Mine," - - - 436—444
- CHAPTER IV.—Joe's Terrific Combat with a Mexican Cougar—  
 California Joe and Jack Corbin in the Black Hills—Joe  
 Saves his Friend's Life—"Ugh! White Man!" - 444—452
- CHAPTER V.—Joe's Weakness—Must have "Pie"—His practical  
 joke on the Big Soldier—"The Grave of Poor Amos  
 Billings"—Incidents and Anecdotes—Murder of California  
 Joe, - - - 452—457

## LIFE OF KIT CARSON.

- CHAPTER I.—Personal Characteristics—Uncertainty of Kit's  
 Birth Place—Early Days in Missouri—Expedition to Santa  
 Fe—Becomes a Mexican Horse Tamer—Engages in Trap-  
 ping—Trip to California—Pursuit of Digger Indians—  
 Charging through their Camp in the Darkness—Kit kills a  
 Mexican—Fights with Indians, - - - 459—469
- CHAPTER II.—Hunting and Trapping in Colorado—Kit pursues  
 an Indian Horse Thief—Overtakes and Kills him—Treed by  
 a Grizzly Bear—Trailing Indians in the Snow—A Council

that Ended in a Fight—Kit Carson is badly Wounded in an Effort to Save a Comrade—Carson's Duel with the Arrogant Frenchman, . . . . .	469—478
CHAPTER III.—Expedition into the Blackfeet Country—Threatened with Starvation—Combats with the Blackfeet—Carson Saves a Fallen Comrade—Trapping on the Great Salt Lake—Terrible Fight with a Mexican Lion—Kit Carson's Indian Wife—Her Death and Kit's visit to St. Louis—Serves as Scout in the Fremont Expedition—Graphic Description of a Buffalo Hunt—Carson's Narrow Escape from a Wounded Buffalo, . . . . .	479—490
CHAPTER IV.—The Second Fremont Expedition—Exploring the Great Salt Lake—Terrible Hardships and Sufferings, . . . . .	490—493
CHAPTER V.—Carson's Service in the Mexican War—Saves a Party of Americans from Annihilation—Close of the Mexican War—Carson's Home in New Mexico—Commissioned Brigadier General—Death of Kit Carson, . . . . .	493—497

## LIFE OF CAPT. D. L. PAYNE.

CHAPTER I.—Early Life—Goes West to Fight the Mormons—Unprofitable Speculation in a Saw Mill—Hunting on the Plains of Kansas—Payne's intimacy with Kit Carson, Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill, California Joe, and other Noted Plainsmen—Service in the Civil War—The Pompous Dutch Inspecting Officer—Payne as a Sailor—The Joke he played on a couple of Starchy Officers—A Gallant Adventure at the Battle of Prairie Grove, . . . . .	498—507
CHAPTER II.—Close of the War—Scouting on the Plains—Capture of Three White Ladies by Indians—The Pursuit and Recapture—Terrible Sufferings during the Expedition—Ten Cheyenne Chiefs in a Close Place—Payne and the Lively Mule—Surrounded and Hemmed In—Saved by Daring and Skill—Capt. Payne's Election to the Kansas Legislature—The Oklahoma Movement—Payne's Arrest and Trial—Personal Characteristics, . . . . .	507—533
SKETCH OF CAPT. JACK, THE POET SCOUT, . . . . .	534—541
SKETCH OF TEXAS JACK, (J. B. Omohundro), . . . . .	542—548



A Ride for Life. (See Page 59.)

THE NEW YORK  
LIBRARY



J. B. HICKOK,  
(Wild Bill.)



# HEROES OF THE PLAINS.

---

## LIFE OF WILD BILL.

(J. B. HICKOK.)

---

### CHAPTER I.

It is a noticeable fact that nearly all our sturdy frontier characters are natives of the West; there is, apparently, something in the atmosphere, in the wild winds which freight the air with primeval perfume; an undefined elemental principle which inoculates Western children with a desire for adventure. Our hero, of course, belongs to that longitudinal nativity where the prairies bathe their feet at the margins of eastern forests, and then roll away to the occident, resting at that great ridge which rises ruggedly into the vertebræ of a continent.

JAMES BUTLER HICKOK, known to history only as "Wild Bill," was born in La Salle county, Illinois, near the country village of Troy Grove, on the 27th of May, 1837. His parents were both natives of Vermont, from which State they removed, directly after marriage, to New York. After following farming for some time in the Empire State, and meeting with indifferent success, in 1834 the family, now consisting of the parents and two children, packed up their few possessions and removed to Illinois, going overland in a "mover's wagon," as was the customary mode of traveling in that early period. A place for settlement was chosen in Putnam county, but two years afterward a more desirable location was found in La Salle county, the homestead then selected

and entered proving so satisfactory that it is still occupied by two survivors of the family.

The house in which Wild Bill was born was built in 1836 and stood, fronting east, upon a prairie one-half mile from the timber skirting little Vermillion creek. The house is still standing, and occupied, but the progress of rapid settlement in Illinois has reared the village of Homer about the pioneer's home, and the birth-place of our hero is now situated in the southeast corner of block



Wild Bill's Birth Place.

number thirteen of that town. The cut of the house as here produced, was made from a drawing executed by H. D. Hickok, in March of the present year, and therefore illustrates the place of to-day, though there have been no material alterations made in the building since its first erection.

The family consisted of six children, four boys and two girls, whose names and ages are as follows: O. C. Hickok, was born in New York in 1830; he is now a resi-

dent of California, and is the trainer and part owner of St. Julian, the greatest horse, perhaps, now on the turf. Lorenzo B. was born, also in New York, in 1832; Horace D. is a native of Putnam county, Illinois, having been born there in 1834; James B., Celinda D., and Lydia M. were born at the old homestead near Troy Grove. Celinda, born in 1839, married a gentleman by the name of Dewey, and is still living in La Salle county, while Lydia, being two years younger, married a farmer named Barnes and is living in Decatur county, Kansas. Lorenzo and Horace are still living on the old homestead. The father died in 1852, and the mother in 1878 after reaching the venerable age of seventy-four years. All the children are living with the exception of James (Wild Bill) whose marvelous career and tragic death will be found fully recorded in the subsequent pages, constituting a leaf in history a parallel to which can be found neither in the annals of fact nor romance.

James, it is said, was peculiar in his ways even in childhood. His earliest desire was for fire-arms, and by bartering a number of childish trinkets, at the age of eight years he became possessed of the greatest treasure his youthful fancy had ever pictured—a little single-barreled pistol. In his eyes this weapon, though a flint-lock and of imperfect make, represented the sum total of earthly wealth; he would not have exchanged it for all the gold of the richest Peruvian Inca, and if staked against his soul there is no doubt but that he would have taken great risk of losing that before parting with his almost priceless treasure. By dint of cunning exchange and barter the youthful sportsman procured powder, and when lead was difficult to obtain he used pebbles, and thus accoutered all his leisure hours were spent in marksmanship, in which, despite the primitive character of his "out-

fit," he occasionally killed a cat, wounded a pig, winged a chicken, or stung a coyote. These foibles sometimes brought a prominent admonition of Solomon into active operation, at great expense to his youthful posterior; but if these corrections made the embryo hunter's sitting position difficult they apprised him, at the same time, of the more comfortable employment of walking, and this was sure to lead him again into the commission of other acts equally indefensible in the eyes of his parents.

At about the age of fourteen James secured an excellent pistol and shortly afterward, by the assistance of his father, he purchased a rifle, and thus armed he remained in the woods almost constantly. At this period the few settlers were greatly annoyed by the ravages of wolves, so much in fact that the State offered premiums for the scalps of these destructive animals. This furnished a remunerative occupation for James who, every evening, returned home with a belt full of bloody prizes which brought him no small revenue at the end of every month when the scalps were carried to the county clerk, as the law provided.

His opportunities for schooling were entirely consistent with his other advantages; country schools had occasional sessions in his district, but a regular attendance was prevented, both by the great distance of the school-house and the irregularity, or rather infrequency, of the sessions. However, he managed to acquire a rudimental education. At the age of fifteen chance threw in his way a copy of Peters' "Life of Kit Carson," and "The Trapper's Guide," two books which he read with the greatest interest. The former made such an impression upon him that he declared to his brothers that he would "one day beat anything Kit Carson ever did or attempted."

Two years after familiarizing himself with Carson's ex-

ploits, James obtained employment as a tow-path driver for the Illinois and Michigan canal. Soon after engaging in this employment he had a difficulty with a driver named Charles Hudson, which resulted in a fistic contest lasting more than an hour. The two began the fight on the tow-path but gradually rolling towards the canal they both finally tumbled into the water, and then it changed from blows into an effort each to drown the other. Hudson was a large man, whose physical abilities were far superior to James', but the latter's cat-like agility fully compensated for his deficiency in strength; in addition to a remarkable activity his endurance was another point of superior excellence, and through these he at length gained such a decided victory that Hudson was taken out of the canal in a lifeless condition, but by dexterous manipulation he was resuscitated. This ended James' canal experience, and he returned home.

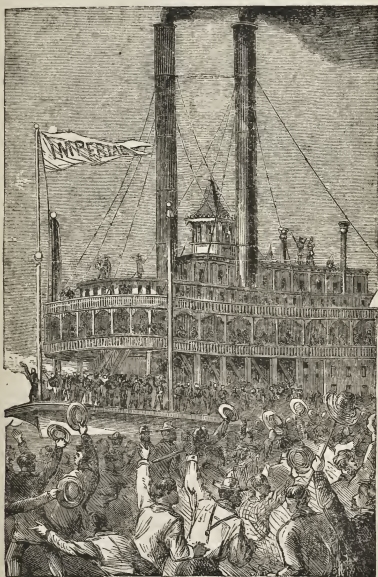
Thus passed the youth of Wild Bill, but who can tell his longing for wider fields of adventure, his craving for escapades in which danger becomes the source of pleasure? When he reached the period of responsible manhood, eighteen years, though the avenues of communication were few and narrow, yet there was brought to his ears stories of the incipient struggles between Missouri and Kansas. As the strife grew fiercer in aspect James decided to seek the arena of conflict; he may have grasped the ideas which actuated the Kansas settlers in repelling all efforts to make their State a territory privileging slavery, but the elements of his nature rather incite a belief that he was moved alone by the knowledge that Kansas soil was vegetating bloody broils, and that the great need of that section was heroes.

In the spring of 1855 our thirsting adventurer, collecting together what money he could command, bade adieu

to his old home, which nestled tamely in the wilderness of prairies, and set out on foot for St. Louis, which city he reached after many days of painful traveling. The world was almost as strange to him as one of the planets, for his intercourse had been confined to such a limited stretch of changeless country, that beyond the village store his vision had never wandered over the scenes of business life. St. Louis was to him a painted panorama, as mysterious as the labyrinths of the pyramids; the steamboats were novelties like the palaces of necromancers, and this new life to him had such a strange aspect that it was very like a second birth. The river business was, at that time, very large, and the Missouri was crowded with steamers plying between St. Louis and Omaha. After much deliberation James engaged passage on the steamer Imperial for Leavenworth, a small acquaintance with city life having infused a new longing for adventure and stimulated him for greater concerns. After a tedious voyage the boat reached Leavenworth, but at the landing met with a reception least expected. Excitement had seized upon everyone and the determination of the people seemed to be the disorganization of society and the formation of a universal mob.

James, an unsophisticated country lad, but withal possessed of a mother acuteness which led him to carefully consider the best means for his own security, carefully noted the excited throng which, without the least show of reason, except exaggerated suspicion, forbade any of the passengers coming on shore. The town of Leavenworth being his destination, however, James determined to leave the boat, and to do this he resorted to a cunning expedient. Tying a large bandana kerchief about his neck, with his pants stuffed carelessly into his boot-legs, and being a deck passenger, he readily assumed the labor of a roustabout and

began to carry off freight. While in this occupation he had no difficulty in slipping away through the crowd and gaining the center of the town, where he at once cast about for means of employment.



Disembarking in a Kansas Mob.

Jim Lane, who had recently come from Indiana with a body of two hundred men, was then the recognized leader of what was known as the "Red Legs," or anti-slavery forces in Kansas, and at this time had his headquarters in Leavenworth. His band consisted of a little more than three hundred men, armed with such weapons as their individual means afforded. James gravitated naturally towards Lane, and within a week after his arrival in Leavenworth he had joined his fortunes with those who were under that leader's generalship. A few days after his enlistment the regiment was called out on the commons west of town for drill and rifle practice. The range was one hundred yards, and the guns used were common squirrel rifles. In the contest of marksmanship James easily beat every other man in the command, and indeed made such excellent scores that Lane personally complimented his accuracy in the most flattering words. While this little ceremony was being conducted, a crow chanced to fly overhead, and, greatly elated at the distinction being shown him, James drew a pistol from his pocket and shot the bird, then carelessly replaced his weapon without remark as to the excellence of the shot. The crowd of men, however, set up a wild cheering, and for several minutes the confusion was so great that Lane could not make himself heard. When the noise had somewhat abated he renewed his flattering compliments, and putting a hand on James' shoulder, he said to his band: "This man, my newest recruit, will one day excite the wonder and admiration of America, and I shall watch his course with the greatest interest and solicitude." After this little incident the regiment gave James the title of "Shanghai Bill," a name which clung to him until after his great fight at Rock Creek, nearly five years afterwards. I can readily conceive the origin of the appella-



tion of "Shanghai," because James was, at this time, no less than six feet in height and uncommonly slim, though very lithe and willowy, but how he came to be called "Bill," instead of "Jim," I have been unable to discover. His most intimate acquaintances are at a loss for the reason, and his diary makes no mention of anything except the time and circumstances under which the "title" was bestowed.

"Bill," as I shall hereafter very properly call him, served with Lane for nearly two years, through the most trying days when Kansas was building a wall on her eastern border out of the blood and bodies of her noblest sons, to keep out Slavery. He fought only as a brave and excellent soldier, always recognized by Lane as the most effective man in the command. In the early part of 1857 Bill entered a claim of one hundred and sixty acres of the finest land in Monticello township, Johnson county, Kansas, and though he was not yet of age, his reputation was such that almost immediately after settling in that section he was elected constable.

But he was not permitted to live in peace in his new home. The "Border Ruffians" of Missouri, who had suffered defeat, held a special grudge against Bill and in their predatory incursions on Kansas soil they visited Monticello township and during the absence of their enemy they burned his cabin. Being unable to revenge this outrage because of the secret identity of the men who did it, Bill went to work again and soon had another comfortable house erected on his premises. His duties as constable called him from home so frequently, however, that the marauders had no difficulty in a second time applying the torch and laying the new house in ashes.

The insecurity of his possessions admonished Bill that his labors would never avail him, as a farmer in Johnson

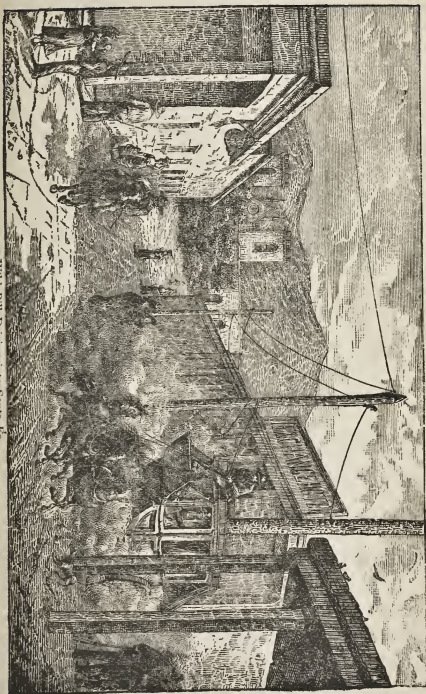
county, and before the year expired he abandoned his claim and accepted a position as driver for the Overland Stage Company. In this capacity he crossed the plains several times, driving from St. Joseph, Denver, and points in Kansas, Colorado and Nebraska, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Salt Lake City. As a driver he was apparently reckless and yet no man ever got through his route so frequently with as few accidents. Coming into his destination Bill usually treated his passengers to "a shaking up," as he called it, "in order to jolt the cricks out of their joints." The last stretch of road entering Santa Fe was a slight decline and over this Bill almost invariably turned the horses loose and gave them the lash. The big Concord coach would bound along like a wounded monster, lurching the passengers from side to side, dishing up dyspeptics, phlegmatics and rollicking dispositions indiscriminately, and bowling into the town finally the centre of a dust bank and the object of excited interest to everyone in the ancient Mexican city.

---

## CHAPTER II.

THE Overland Stage Company, like the great freighters, Majors, Russell & Waddell, had its routes over the entire West. It was a very easy matter at that time, and in that peculiar civilization, for a man, so disposed, to make a record. In fact, it was more difficult for him not to make one, for he was soon put down as either an arrant coward or a man of nerve. Every station was located by a saloon and every stage employe was practically an animated skin-full of fighting whisky. Desperate rows were as common as wax-weed flowers on the

Wild Bill Driving into Santa Fe



prairie in spring-time, and the man who had failed to snuff out a life was like a bashful fellow at a country dance—wofully out of place. But Shanghai Bill's record was recognized in the bud, for his physical ability had been demonstrated in many social encounters, and while he had gone through the ordeal of more than a score of fights his master had not yet been found. Being also acknowledged as the best shot on the plains and fortified with a wonderful self-possession under trying circumstances, full of cunning, strategy and pluck, he was already a hero by general consent of all who knew him.

In the fall of 1858 the Indians broke out of their reservation on the Sweetwater and began their depredations to the serious injury of the stage company. Several settlers had been massacred, two pony express riders killed, and, being emboldened by their success, they at length attacked a stage coach near the three crossings on Sweetwater creek. In this encounter the driver and three passengers were killed and the assistant division agent escaped with a serious wound. In addition to this outrage the Indians stole a large number of horses belonging to the stage company and rendered its business so extremely hazardous that for nearly two months the express and stage were suspended on that division. The company, being thus enjoined from operations, and appreciating the necessity of some decisive action, sent for Bill. He promptly responded and meeting the officers at St. Joseph they went into council to consider the best means of proceeding against the Indians. Bill was the first to offer a proposition looking to a solution of the troubles. Said he: "You have got enough men here, if they are turned loose right, to clean out all the Red Devils along the route, and all the men now idle would consider it a frolic to go into the Indian service for a short time."

He was requested to perfect his plans and given full authority to conduct the proposed operations according to his own wishes. Bill at once had the men called together and in his own pithy phrases related to them what was wanted ; a hearty disposition to engage in the expedition was manifested by every one, and on the following day preparations were made to leave. About fifty men enlisted, all of whom were well provided with the best of arms and good horses ; before starting they unanimously chose Bill as their leader, promising implicit obedience to his orders.

The well equipped and organized body set out on the 29th day of September, pointing directly for the Powder River. When they reached that stream, along which they expected to find the Indians encamped, they saw nothing but an indistinct trail leading westwardly. This the company followed for three days, finding it growing constantly fresher, when suddenly they found, upon reaching Crazy Woman's Fork—a small stream usually dry during summer and frozen solid in winter—that the Indians whom they were so successfully trailing, had been joined by another party in war paint numbering not less than one hundred. Here was a dilemma which caused several in the command to falter, for it was now evident that the whole band of Indians comprised fully two hundred, and to meet with such an overwhelming force seemed like charging the guns at Balaklava. But Bill gave his men no opportunity to talk about the increasing danger of the expedition, for he proposed to shoot the first man who attempted to return. This bold threat may not have been needed, for though there were some expressions concerning the judiciousness of following so large a band of Indians, yet every one under Bill was full, up to the chin, with dare-devil courage, and

they could be depended on to fight a ten-acre field full of grizzly bears with only a tooth-pick for a weapon if they were only put to it.

Finding the trail decidedly fresh, the party, with Bill always in the lead, proceeded with due circumspection, gaining the high knolls cautiously, and sweeping the landscape to discover if the enemy were in view. At Clear Creek the crossing was apparently made but two or three hours before, and almost immediately after this discovery, the day being well advanced, Bill commanded a halt, and pointing directly north, he said: "Do you see that little blue vapor hanging on the tree tops? Well, that means an Indian camp. You boys just stop right here and I'll locate the game." So saying he left the trail and rode like he was making to the windward of a herd of buffaloes, taking a broad circuit in order to reach some high ground from which he could discover the exact strength of the Indians, how their camp was pitched, where their stock was stationed and whether tethered or corraled. All this information was soon gathered by Bill, who returned and ordered his men to rest until dark, get themselves in good readiness and be prepared for a dashing fight after night-fall.

The company remained in camp, without fire, until nearly ten o'clock, getting a good rest and permitting their horses to recover from the tiresome march. When Bill called his men to the saddle each one responded with alacrity. His instructions then were for each man to follow him into the Indian camp and to fight only with the pistol; to make for the stock which, being in a corral, would be easily stampeded and run out, so it could be collected and secured. These instructions were obeyed to the letter; the party rode cautiously toward the camp, which being found unpicketed was easily approached,

and then a dash was made for the corral by twelve of the men while the others rode into the camp and as the half

Wild Bill and his Men Charging the Indian Camp.



stupefied Indians came out of their tents, not realizing what the confusion meant, they were shot down until the attack became a slaughter. The surprise was complete ;

while the deadly revolvers in the hands of those who so well knew how to use them, did fearful execution. All the horses were secured except a few scrub ponies, and then it was an easy matter to get off, for there was nothing left on which the Indians could make pursuit.

The men returned with all the horses stolen from the stage company, together with more than a hundred head of those belonging to the Indians. After getting back to St. Joseph the brilliant results of the campaign superinduced a general big drunk in which all the stage employes participated, and, though very strange to assert, yet none the less true, the row which followed as a matter of course, resulted in the killing of only one man, a stage driver, by Alf. Slade, one of the company bosses.

Severing his connectin with the Overland Stage Co., in 1859, Bill engaged with the great freighters, Majors & Russels, to drive between Independence, Mo., and Santa Fe, New Mexico. It was while thus employed that he met with a unique adventure which cost him very dearly but taught him a very useful lesson. Matt Farley was his companion on one occasion during this long overland trip, and but for him the name of Wild Bill would never have been heard. While passing through the Soccro range with his team two miles ahead of Farley, Bill discovered a large cinnamon bear with her two cubs directly in the road ahead of him. The bear, instead of manifesting any fear at Bill's approach, but moved entirely by her maternal instincts, boldly disputed his passage, and with further advance of the team she growled fiercely and showed her intention to attack him. Bill being provided with two excellent pistols and a large bowie-knife gave himself no concern for the result of the encounter, thinking it an easy matter to kill the bear—a presumption in which he was most seriously mistaken.



When the bear approached within twenty feet of him he fired one of his pistols, the ball striking her squarely in the forehead, but the accurate aim instead of proving fatal had no other effect than to put the beast in a more desperate rage, for the cinnamon, like the grizzly, has a brain protection so thick that the ball from an ordinary rifle will produce no impression on it. In fact, many experienced hunters claim that the cinnamon is much more dangerous than the grizzly, because of its greater activity and equal vitality. Bill at once discovered, from the bad result of his first shot, that he had an antagonist bent on a mission which might well afford serious apprehensions. His first feeling of security prevented him from taking safety on the top of his wagon and now he was cut off from that means of escape. In fact he had no time to think of retreat after the first shot was discharged, for the bear was fairly on him in the next instant; he discharged his second pistol and succeeded in injuring the animal's left foreleg, as he intended, but as he jerked his long knife the bear reared on her hind legs and grappled him. The struggle which now ensued was one of the most desperate ever known. Bill buried the knife rapidly in various parts of the bear's body and cut her throat, but while doing this his shoulder was torn dreadfully, his left arm crushed from the elbow, his breast furrowed by the long, poniard-like claws, and his left cheek was split open. But he never regarded his terrible wounds, standing up in the agonizing embrace of the infuriated animal until the ground on which they fought was saturated with blood. Bill finally slipped and fell, the bear falling squarely on top of him and holding his left arm in her mouth. This fall, was, however, a most fortunate circumstance, for the position was easily reversed and Bill could use his knife with greater

effect ; while, in a standing position, although injured in one of her forelegs, yet the bear could with this member seriously interfere with the execution of Bill's single free hand. Before the fight was concluded he had literally disembowled the dangerous animal and her feet became so tangled in her intestines that she thus assisted in her own quick destruction.

The combat lasted nearly half an hour and at its close it was difficult to decide which presented the more horrifying spectacle, Bill or his dead antagonist ; they were both saturated with blood and their flesh was in shreds in several places. However, Bill survived, but when his companion, Farley, came up he was barely able to point to the dead bear and his own desperate lacerations. Bill was hauled to Santa Fe and there placed under the charge of Dr. Sam Jones, an excellent frontier surgeon, who, by good attention, was able to so far restore his patient in two months' time as to permit Bill's return to Independence. But it was not until several months after his discharge from the surgeon's care that Bill was able to resume work again, and the scars from the wounds received in that encounter he bore to his grave.

In the latter part of 1860, Bill left the employment of Majors & Russel to accept a position tendered him by the Overland Stage Co. as watchman and hostler at Rock Creek Station, a point on the Old Platte route fifty miles west of Topeka. The stage company, which ran its coaches between St. Joseph, Mo., and Denver, had established Rock Creek as a relay post and had built stables for the accommodation of about twenty-five horses, which number was almost always found there. Bill had a companion with him known as Doc. Mills, a small Irishman, who did the cooking and assisted in the care of the horses, in fact performing a greater part of the menial duties, as



WILD BILL AND THE CINNAMON BEAR.



J. W. Anderson

Bill was employed, chiefly, to guard the stock, owing to the depredations of horsethieves who were very numerous in that section. The two occupied a small log hut, having but one room, which was divided, however, by the suspension of an old horse-blanket, back of which was their bed. The roof of the hut was thatched, and being built on the side of a steep hill it was easy to walk from the hill directly on to the roof. It was what is universally called in the far West a "dug-out," there being but one entrance, in the front, and not a single window. To the right of the "dug-out" were the stables, built of heavy logs and so secure that when the big puncheon doors were locked it would require the services of a professional safe-cracker to effect a violent entrance. It was here that Bill and his chum spent the autumn days, in the very heart of the dreariest solitude between Missouri and the Rocky Mountains. But even away up in this wild place the news of an approaching struggle between the North and South had penetrated and as the daily coach rolled up before the cabin door Bill always anxiously inquired for papers and information.

In the same neighborhood, not more than thirteen miles west of Rock Creek, there was a rendezvous known as the McCandlas ranche. It was located in a barely accessible spot, and well known to Bill as a corral for stolen horses. The two McCandlas boys, Jack and Jim, had long been a terror to the central part of Kansas; had killed more innocent men and stolen a greater number of fine horses than any other two thieving cut-throats that ever figured in the annals of Western outlawry. They had enlisted about one dozen of equally desperate horsethieves, and this band laid enforced tribute upon every farmer in that section, and when horse stealing grew dull or unprofitable the McCandlases turned their talents—

which were decidedly versatile—to highway robbery, occasionally stopping a stage, or murdering a party of travelers. They had so overrun the country and asserted their power that no attempt was ever made to arrest them, the officers of the several adjoining counties fairly standing in awe of the McCandlas name.

Kansas, although one of the strongest Union States, nevertheless furnished some recruits for the Confederate service, and among the active sympathizers with the South, in the central part of the State, the McCandlas gang was particularly prominent. By what authority he acted was never discovered; perhaps it was by none, and that his assumed authority was but a pretext for bolder robbery; but it is certain that Jack McCandlas asserted his special employment to collect horses, and enlist recruits for the Confederate service.

About five miles from Rock Creek station, toward the head of the branch, lived an old man named Shapley, a good old soul who, with his aged wife, was known for kindness of heart and a wholesome sympathy. As occasion sometimes offered he would preach at points in the neighborhood when as many as a dozen persons could be collected together, a circumstance which the sparse settlement very seldom afforded. This occasional occupation gained for him the titular honor of parson, so that he was always called Parson Shapley by those who knew him. Notwithstanding his grey hairs and naturally peaceful disposition, when the threats of rebellion struck his ears, the parson was not slow to show the blood, at least, of his fighting ancestors. He was a pronounced Union man and like a true Westerner spit out his mind without regard for results, and by an unconcealed patriotism rendered himself specially obnoxious to the McCandlas thieves. On the 16th day of December, 1870,

Wild Bill, whose title of "Wild" was so soon to be gained, saw coming down the stage road a party of four horsemen headed by Jim McCandlas, who was leading the venerable old parson by a lariat fastened about his neck. The sight aroused Bill's sympathy, but while he was well disposed to assist the aged man yet discretion admonished him of the fruitlessness of such an undertaking under existing circumstances. When the party came abreast of the "dug-out," McCandlas in a most audacious and authoritative manner spoke to Bill as follows:

"Look a here, I mean business; I am a gatherin' up horses for the Secesh service and I want yer to jist git them thar horses in yer stable ready for me when I come back here, which will be about three or four o'clock this afternoon. This old hypercritical devil I've got here has been a havin' of his say a little too free around here and I concluded to take him along and show him the needssesity of keepin' his mouth shet."

In addition to this burst of mandatory language McCandlas endeavored to persuade Bill to join him and enter the Confederate service, but the reply was one of those fearless expressions which Bill knew so well how to give. Said he:

"You go to h—l! when you want these horses come and take them, and if you want me, you'll have no difficulty in finding me here." Bill then withdrew into the dug-out, while McCandlas and his men rode on toward their rendezvous.

Now it happened that Doc. Mills had left the cabin only a short time before, and gone down the creek some distance, taking a shot-gun with him to kill quails or other game he might find, to provision the place with meat. Thus Bill was left alone, with no one even to consult regarding the most desirable method of defense. In the

cabin there were several weapons, however, consisting of a Mississippi Yager—a rifle of very large bore—two revolvers and two bowie-knives. Finding these in good condition Bill determined to give the party, on their return, an interesting reception and trust to luck for the outcome. The stables were securely closed and the dug-out put in a state of defense.

Directly after three o'clock in the afternoon, true to their promise, the McCandlas boys, with eight of their desperate followers were seen approaching in a smart trot. As they came up to the stables, finding the doors locked, they called to Bill to "come out of his shell" and deliver the horses, accompanying the command with a threat that if he refused there would be a small murder at Rock Creek and the stage company would have to engage another watchman.

Bill shouted back to his beleaguers that he would shoot the first man who attempted to open a stable door, and if there were any murdering done at Rock Creek there might also be more than one victim to bury.

The ten villains were really elated with this reply, because they had a spite which found in this answer sufficient pretext for satisfying; in short, they wanted to kill somebody in addition to increasing their horse corral, and Bill, single handed, would make such an easy and choice victim! Leaving their horses, which they first methodically tied to swinging limbs, Jack McCandlas ordered his men to bring forward a log, which lay near the premises, and with this they began battering the door of the dug-out, which succumbed after a few heavy thrusts had been delivered. Bill stood partly behind the old blanket, with the Yager in hand and his other weapons lying on a rude table beside him, convenient to his grasp. When the door splintered and fell in Jim





WILD BILL'S FIGHT WITH THE MC CANDLESS GANG.



McCandlas with a large revolver in one hand and a bowie-knife in the other, with a yell leaped across the threshold, pressed by the others behind him. But the voluntary leap ended in an involuntary spring into eternity, for Bill received him with a discharge from the heavy rifle, sending an ounce ball directly through the desperado's heart. Jim never struggled after he fell, only drawing up his legs slightly, as if to give more room for the entrance of his comrades. Scarcely was the blaze from the rifle extinguished before Bill had seized his pistols and killed three more of his assailants before any of them reached him. The combat now became truly furious, for the six remaining cut-throats had gained the rear of the cabin and grappled with Bill who continued pouring shots from a pistol while he began cutting right and left with his bowie. The gang were equally active, discharging bullets into Bill's body, but owing to their number they fought to great disadvantage. One of the desperadoes struck Bill over the head and knocked him backward across the table, and immediately Jack McCandlas leaped on the prostrate and badly wounded man, and with knife uplifted was in the very act of sheathing the keen blade in the heart of his victim, but ere the thrust was accomplished Bill shoved his pistol into McCandlas' breast and fired. The knife descended with great force, but the aim was deflected so that it struck in the table. McCandlas trembled for a moment with the chill of death that shot through his body, and with fierce but glazing eyes he dropped dead upon the floor. The bowie in Bill's hands now did desperate work, plunging from one heart into another, and drawing great fountains of blood which spurted about until the floor was fairly flooded; but his own life current assisted largely to swell the bright red streams, for his

body was punctured by bullet holes and knife thrusts, but the recesses of his life had not been touched and his strong arm continued to do its deadly work. Six of the men who came to make of Bill an easy victim now lay dead upon the floor, while two were desperately wounded and only two remained unharmed. Finding in their foe such wonderful vitality and precision of deadly aim with pistol and knife the four beat a retreat, rushing out of the cabin pursued closely by Bill. The two uninjured gained their horses and fled precipitately while another ran down the hill carrying such desperate wounds that he was unable to mount. The other could barely reach the foot of a large tree fifty yards from the cabin and there he was shot to death by Bill with the gun wrested from Doc. Miller, who came upon the scene at this moment. The wounded man who escaped by running down the hill (Bill being unable to pursue him because of his own desperate wounds,) managed by some means to reach the town of Manhattan, several miles distant, where he died soon after from his terrible injuries.

After the fight was ended Bill, who had kept his feet only under the stimulant of excessive excitement, at once relapsed into an unconscious condition and was carried into the dug-out by his partner, and laid on the bed, which was saturated with blood. In about one hour afterward the western stage rolled up, containing six passengers, among whom was Capt. E. W. Kingsbury, who is now a resident of Kansas City, holding the position of Chief of U. S. Storekeepers for the Western District of Missouri, who afterward became one of Bill's most intimate friends. The sight which presented itself to the gaze of the stage passengers, all of whom entered the cabin to view the havoc which one man had wrought, was most distressing to ordinary sensibilities. There lay, in

hideous death, six repulsive featured men, full of gaping wounds.

Bill remained in a semi-conscious state for some time, until one of the passengers, who chanced to be something of a surgeon, resuscitated him by means of brandy and cold water applications; and after a while he regained sufficient strength to give some of the particulars of the desperate fight. While telling, in broken sentences, how he had been forced into a defense of the place, he used this expression: "When six of the crowd piled on me and one struck me with his gun, I thought my day had come, so I just got wild and slashed about, like a bear with a death-wound, and I guess that is how I came to get away with them." From that moment he was given the name of "Wild Bill," which afterward so effectually superceded his real name, as well also as that of "Shanghai Bill," that he went to his grave with that appellation and left all his deeds to history under that most appropriate *nom de guerre*.

A careful examination of his wounds disclosed the following, nearly any one of which it would appear was quite enough to kill an ordinary man: A fracture of the skull—the frontal bone; three terrible gashes in the breast; his left forearm cut through to the bone; four bullets in his body, one in his left hip and two through the fleshy part of his right leg; his right cheek cut open, and the skin of his forehead cut so deeply that a large portion of the scalp dropped down so far over his eyes as to almost blind him. A surgeon was sent for, who came directly from Manhattan, about seven miles distant, and old Mrs. Watkins, a five-mile distant neighbor, hearing of the encounter, came down to the cabin directly and volunteered to nurse the wounded hero through his dangerous extremity. For one month afterward his im-

provement was almost imperceptible, but after that time his condition took a more favorable turn and his wounds healed so rapidly that in June following he was able to walk about, and was removed to Denver, and in less than one year after the fight his recovery was complete. The stage company paid all of his expenses during the period of his confinement, but never otherwise recognized his faithfulness in defending their property.

This combat, of one man fairly whipping ten acknowledged desperadoes, has no parallel, I make bold to say, in any authentic history. The fight has been described more than a hundred times in newspapers and periodicals, and was illustrated in Harper's Magazine, but all accounts heretofore have been marred by much fiction and gross inaccuracies. The particulars as here recorded are unquestionably correct, for they were obtained from Capt. Kingsbury, who heard Bill's first recital of the facts right on the battle-ground; Jolly, the man who escaped but died a few days afterward at Manhattan, corroborated Bill's statement of the facts, and Dr. Joshua Thorne, one of the most prominent physicians in Kansas City, who attended upon and was one of Bill's confidantes, repeated to me the same story as he himself had heard his patient relate it. These direct and most reliable sources, each affirming the same facts, leave no room for doubting the correctness of this account.

---

### CHAPTER III.

LEAVING Denver, Wild Bill went directly to Leavenworth, and his name being in nearly every person's mouth as the greatest fighter that had ever made a record, owing

to his annihilation of the McCandlas gang, Gen. John C. Fremont, in command at Fort Leavenworth, sent for him immediately upon hearing of his arrival, and offered him the position of Brigade Wagon Master. At this time the great civil war had overshadowed everything else, and the adjoining borders of Missouri and Kansas had become the theater of a truly direful conflict. Men of nerve and cunning were in great demand, for murder, under the color of justifiable war, was beginning to point its shivering finger at every highway where the blood of men had quenched the thirst of the earth. Bill accepted the position, though not under enlistment, and directly thereafter he was ordered to conduct a provision train from the Fort to Sedalia, Missouri. On the third day after their departure, a few miles inside the Missouri line, the train was suddenly attacked by a company of Confederates under Capt. Blunt, who, owing to the almost unexampled cowardice of the men under Bill—though numbering scarcely more than one dozen—captured the outfit without meeting any resistance. However, while the Confederates easily made prisoners of his men, Bill refused to surrender, and single-handed opened fire. Being well mounted, he turned his horse toward Kansas City, followed by fifty of the enemy. The chase continued for several miles, with a rapid exchange of shots, in which flying encounter Bill killed four of his pursuers and escaped himself without injury. Col. Jennison had a considerable force under him at Kansas City, and Bill, reporting the circumstances of the capture of his train, two companies were hastily mounted and sent out to recover the property. Bill accompanied the soldiers, and by fast riding the Confederates were struck within fifteen miles of the place where the first attack was made. A charge was at once ordered, at the head

of which rode Wild Bill, who, considering the fact of his new commission, felt that he had been dishonored by the loss of his first charge. The fight was a short and decisive one, for the Confederates, being taken by surprise, in return, speedily scattered and thus let their new acquisition again fall into the possession of the Union troops. Bill was very much elated over the result, and in triumph conducted the train into Sedalia and immediately afterward offered his services to Gen. Samuel R. Curtis, who was acting under orders of Gen. Halleck, and who continued him in the position to which Gen. Fremont had appointed him, until the spring of 1863.

During his engagement as wagon master, conveying supplies for Curtis' army, which was operating against the Confederate forces under Gens. Van Dorn, Price and McCulloch, the battle of Pea Ridge was fought (March 6th, 7th and 8th, '62), in which Bill became a voluntary participant, taking the part of a sharp shooter. He obtained an eligible location on the hill overlooking Cross-Timber Hollow, and from behind a large log, where he lay concealed for nearly four hours, he killed, by actual count, thirty-five of the enemy, among his victims being Gen. McCulloch. This dreadful execution served to direct the attention of a Confederate company which determined upon dislodging and killing him. The company charged up the hill, firing so rapidly that Bill's fortification was punctured by bullets like a pepper box, and but for the timely relief of one hundred comrades who had recognized his dangerous position and charged down from the apex of the hill to the rescue, he would certainly have soon resembled his friendly log. The two companies met not more than one hundred yards from the spot where Wild Bill lay, and an engagement followed which was by far the hottest of the entire battle, for the encounter came



hand to hand and the ground was so bitterly disputed that more than one half of each company was killed.

Soon after the battle of Pea Ridge Gen. Curtis, discovering the qualifications Wild Bill possessed, and knowing his history as a fighter on the plains, engaged him as a spy, with instructions to enter Price's lines and collect necessary information as to the immediate and ultimate intentions of the Confederate general. Price had already laid waste a large portion of Western Missouri, besides recruiting his forces by the acquisition of many men and horses. He had been so successful in the campaign that the Government was seriously alarmed, especially as Missouri was never regarded as a loyal State, and it was gravely feared that a series of Confederate successes inside her borders might serve to carry the State out of the Union, a proposition already seriously debated. It was for these reasons that Gen. Curtis had been specially employed to operate against Price and drive him from the State. Immediately after Bill's employment as a spy he was given a fine horse and directed to use his own means for entering the Confederate lines. Accordingly, he assumed the name of Bill Barnes and making a wide circuit through Kansas and Indian Territory he entered Arkansas below the western center and made directly toward Little Rock. Arriving there he enlisted in a Confederate company of mounted rangers which he knew was organizing under Price's recruiting service to join the operating force in Southwest Missouri.

In the latter part of September the company joined Price, who, a few days after, formed a junction with Gen. Joe Shelby on Elk River, in Newton county. Here it was decided to make a stand and await the coming of Curtis who was following swiftly after with a force slightly inferior to that of the combined commands of Price and Shelby.

Bill received the appointment of orderly to Gen. Price within a week after his enlistment, a position which offered special opportunities for acquiring information of the greatest value to Curtis. On the 23d day of October the Union forces drove in the Confederate pickets on the north side of the river—or more properly creek—and at once the command prepared for battle. Shelby lay on the extreme left, while Price occupied the right, from which, being first in the command, he was to direct the engagement. While the armies were thus lying looking into the face of each other, separated only by a narrow creek and the rapidly approaching twilight which admonished each side to postpone the fight until the morrow, Gen. Price placed some dispatches in Bill's hands and ordered him to deliver them to Shelby at once. The position of the daring spy had now become critical in the extreme. From the moment Shelby had joined Price, Bill had been very anxious to communicate with Curtis, but no opportunity was offered. But now that preparations had been made for battle it was more than important that he should gain the Union lines, and he resolved to reach Curtis at all hazards, a determination which he accomplished by having recourse to the following dangerous strategy. In the company that had been recently recruited at Little Rock was a large, lank Arkansas desperado named Jake Lawson. He was A 1 at drinking, shooting, cutting and bloviating. His reputation for being a "rough customer" had caused him to be chosen sergeant of the company, and the manner of his boasting led all his comrades to expect something brilliantly daring from him during the campaign. Taking the dispatches from Gen. Price, Wild Bill, with a courteous sweep of his hand, mounted his horse and rode directly toward the left of the lines, but when he reached the

center, out of Price's sight, he halted before his company and called for Lawson. When the big bully came out of his tent Bill, in a loud voice, so that all his comrades might hear the dialogue, addressed him as follows:

"See here, Jake, let's have a little fun; these fellows have never been under fire, so suppose we give 'em a sample of our pluck so as to encourage them for tomorrow."

"Well," responded Lawson, "what do you want to do? Do you want to fight me with pistols at three paces, or do you prefer the bowie with the two ends of a handkerchief held in our teeth over the back of a chair?"

"Oh, no," said Bill, "nothing so bad as that; but I'll make you take water on a less dangerous experiment. I'll wager my horse against yours that I can ride closer to the enemy's line than you can."

Lawson looked at Bill a moment, and then tossing his head, as an evidence of disgust, walked again into his tent, when a laugh from those near the two caused him to stop.

"What's the matter with your nerve?" asked Bill. "You ain't afraid, are you, Jake?"

"No, I aint afeerd," responded Lawson, "but what's the use trying such infernal nonsense?"

"None at all," replied Bill, "if you haven't got the sand to accept the challenge. I only wanted to see the real color of your character."

At this the boys began to laugh again, and several were bold enough to remark that it did look very much as though Jake Lawson was a bogus desperado.

Being pressed and taunted Jake at length agreed to put his mettle as well as his horse against that of Bill's, and the two mounting rode out, followed anxiously by the eyes of the entire company, until they came to an open

space directly in view of the Union forces. "Now, come on," cried Bill, who, putting spurs to his horse, dashed down toward the creek with Lawson abreast, but about two rods west of him. The Union pickets seeing the riders coming toward them, began firing, which brought into line the forces of both armies. Upon reaching the bank of the stream Bill, being in great danger himself



A Close Shave.

from the bullets of his friends, cried out: "Hold your fire, I'm Wild Bill, trying to get into the lines." This remark, while it revealed him to his friends, also exposed his purpose to Lawson and the Confederates. Seeing now that he had been caught in a cunning trap the big sergeant attempted to draw his pistol, but Bill's eyes were upon him and the next instant he had sent a ball

crashing through his brain, and as he fell his horse, galloping on, was caught by Bill who spurred his own horse into the stream leading by the bridle that of the dead sergeant. By the time Bill had reached the middle of the creek, making necessarily slow progress, the Confederates poured down to the bank and more than fifty rifles were turned loose at the fugitive. The bullets were falling about his head like mosquitoes swarming over fresh prey, splashing the water in his face and singing their enquiring impromptus fairly in his ears. Truly, it was a position almost as hot as that which tradition tells us the Hebrew trio occupied on a memorable occasion, but without the protection of a sacred guardianship Bill passed through that fire of leaden hail without receiving the least injury. As he emerged on the opposite side of the stream, with the two horses, a great cheer of congratulation went up from Curtis' men, and then a brisk engagement followed between the two opposing forces across the creek. With great respect Wild Bill placed in Gen. Curtis' hands the dispatches entrusted to him by Gen. Price for transmission to Shelby, and imparted such other information as fully advised Curtis of the strength and intentions of the Confederates. The battle which was expected to take place on the following day was avoided by the Confederates who, breaking camp that night, pushed onward into Arkansas.

Remaining with Curtis a few days, who continued the chase after the Confederates, Wild Bill was requested to again enter the ranks of the enemy for information. Repairing to a tent by himself for a while he spent the time in changing his appearance so as to escape detection. His make-up now was so ingenious that it was almost impossible for Gen. Curtis himself to recognize him. From a sleek, trim and neat figure, with perfectly fitting clothes,

he emerged from his tent one of the most woe-be-gone specimens of *Arkansaw* travelers the country afforded. There was that idiomatic expression, too, which disfigured his voice equally as the clothes did his body. Thus prepared for his dangerous mission, and accompanied by Natt Tuckett, an old and valuable friend, he again set out, going south-west, through the Indian Territory, and down into central Texas where, at Austin, he and Tuckett joined the Confederate forces under Kirby Smith. A few days afterward Smith struck his tents and moved up into Arkansas, that State having now become the theatre of a desperate conflict between divisions from both armies. Curtis had pushed Price and Shelby until the debated ground had become like fighting a man on his own hearth-stone, and instead of seeking an open or decisive engagement his movements were now directed by a wholesome regard for possible results. Smith reached the Arkansas river near Lewisburg, in Conway county, and while there encamped his advance scouts reported the approach of Curtis with a force of five thousand men and two pieces of light ordnance. The respective commands were about equal, though Smith was without any field guns. There being a ferry at Lewisburg the Confederates made a crossing and pushed forward to gain an advantage ground and throw up breastworks so as to receive the Federals while in line of march. But the surprise was not accomplished, as Curtis was an officer of great caution and being in the enemy's own country he kept his advance well guarded. Locating Smith, Curtis halted, in line of battle, on a little knoll about one thousand yards from the position occupied by the Confederates, and bringing his two ten pound guns into action, he began a brisk shelling with the hope of dislodging the enemy and bringing on an engagement in the opening.

But Smith immediately despatched back for reinforcements and remained sullenly silent, receiving the fire of the Federals passively, as in fact it was wholly ineffectual.

The position of the two armies remained unchanged for more than an hour, the field-pieces continuing their rapid discharges and the shells screaming apparently only for the amusement of both sides. Suddenly there were descried two horsemen leaping from the breastworks and making a bold and rapid dash toward the Federal lines. More than a minute elapsed before a shot was fired, which clearly indicated that the Confederates had either despatched the riders for some singular purpose, or else did not themselves at first comprehend the strange action. But surprise was terminated and curiosity satisfied by a rapid discharge of musketry followed by a dozen cavalrymen well mounted and in rapid pursuit. Now the ride began in earnest and a wild one it proved to be. The Federals at once saw that the two first riders were fugitives from the Confederate lines and a hurrah went up, which swelled on the air like an engagement with new brigades just brought into action. For the first two or three hundred yards a regular distance was maintained between the pursued and pursuers, but after this two from the latter party began to distance their comrades and gain on the deserters. Coming to a broad ditch the horse of one cleared it with a bound while the other rider went down with a mortal wound from the pistols of the two nearest pursuers. The next moment the single fugitive was seen to wheel his horse and, putting out his arms, two whiffs of smoke ascended and the two pursuers fell under their horses feet and lay so still that it was unnecessary to inquire if their wounds were mortal. The fugitive then rode into the Federal lines waving his broad

sombrero over his head but with tears coursing rapidly down his sun-burnt cheeks. It was Wild Bill, the spy, who had performed this perilous feat, starting out in company with his friend Tuckett who now lay dead by the ditch midway between the two armies. With an escort of three men Bill rode back and recovered the body of his beloved comrade and then with due solemnity it was buried in a green spot on the hillside near the battery.

The motive which prompted this remarkable ride cannot be divined. Of course Bill had important information to convey to Gen. Curtis, but other means might have been employed, more consistent with good judgment, to reach the Federal lines. It was, however, no less singular that Bill thus comported himself at all times during his service as a spy; though wonderfully strategic yet he took chances which no other spy would have tolerated in a companion, for he exposed himself almost constantly to detection, and trusted to boldness, swiftness, and his accuracy of aim for escape; and with these, or good luck, he managed to avoid the usual penalties of indiscretion.

After getting back from his second expedition as a spy in the Confederate lines, Bill requested a short vacation, and returned to Leavenworth, Kansas, where he met William Cody who had not yet gained the well-known title of "Buffalo Bill." The two had met before the war and an intimacy had sprung up, growing out of an incident which occurred directly after Cody first entered the employ of Russell, Majors & Waddell, as camp boy in 1857. "Billy," as he was called, being at that time only twelve years of age, though brave as a young catamount, became the special object of aversion to one of the bull-drivers, a great big, blustering, overbearing desperado. Under a slight pretext this bully struck "Billy" one day while



in camp, knocking him backward over a log. Wild Bill witnessed this unprovoked assault and, making two steps forward, he struck the bully a blow in the face which sent him sprawling ten feet away while the blood spurted from his nose in a torrent. It was a clean knock-down which took the overbearing brute with such surprise that he scarcely realized from whence the blow came. But he saw Wild Bill standing over him, and took excellent heed of the admonition "never to lay hands on that boy again."

When Wild Bill met Cody in Leavenworth he was under engagement to take a government train to Rolla, Missouri, and he asked Cody to go with him, which the latter was glad to do. After reaching Rolla the two continued their companionship to St. Louis, taking with them a fine race-horse that Bill had used in scouting service, intending to enter the St. Louis races which were advertised to take place in September. Bill and Cody had been saving up some money, and between them they counted up about \$750, principally in paper money of State bank issue. The two went out to the race-course in fine spirits, confident of securing a goodly stake, because they harbored the suspicion that their horse was very deceptive in his appearance and that this advantage they would turn to good account. Their only concern was in getting their bets taken, for they felt so certain that "Old Mountain," as the horse was called, could easily run away with any animal the St. Louis jockeys could produce that a perfectly natural anxiety was felt for the prime consideration—bettors.

Bill conducted the negotiations, Cody having entrusted him with this part of the business, laying his last cent in his comrade's hands. There were no combinations or pool selling, the races being conducted on a regular,

old time basis. Bill moved around among the crowd making offers, and his success in getting takers filled him with happiness, "for you know," said he to Cody, who believed him implicitly, "we've got a dead sure thing." After putting up all their money they next wagered the horse against \$250, and having exhausted all their portables the race was prepared for. Cody, a spare, but trimly made young fellow, one of the best riders that ever sat on horse-back, was stripped to handle "Old Mountain." The race was with a little black mare owned by a party from Peoria, very neatly coupled, with all the marks of a genuine courser, and was ridden by a negro boy.

The preliminaries being arranged the two horses were brought up before the judges and sent off in elegant style, no advantage. "Old Mountain," however, had not deceived the St. Louis boys so much as he had drawn the wool down over the eyes of his backers, and as the little black mare sped away, lifting up the dust so that it fairly hid "Old Mountain," Cody gathered the impression, disagreeable as it was, that "the dead sure thing" had been transferred to other parties. How he did try to unlimber his favorite! and he was now as unsparing of the whip as he had been before the race in laying his wagers.

When they passed under the home-stretch Bill and Cody looked, for all the world, like the fellow who has bought a gold brick,—“it was stolen you know, and here is a fortune for a few dollars”—but finds on inspection that there has been a slight mistake—a veneering of gold over a genuine brick of brass.

Our two heroes were woefully "busted," and away out of their element, because they did not know a single person in St. Louis. Sorry enough plight, but, like a clause in the Declaration of Independence, "When, in

the course of human events, it becomes necessary to beard the lion in his lair, the Indian in his wigwam, or the wood-chuck in his hole—when you're out of meat," etc., our two knights of the empty pocket-book passed appropriate resolutions which, being acted upon, resulted in Wild Bill going up to military headquarters where he engaged himself as scout. Being well known by his reputation, he was forced to put this in pawn for twenty dollars, which he turned over to his badly damaged protege. Cody returned to Leavenworth while Bill went directly to Springfield and from this point located and again joined Curtis, where we find him in the adventure described in the following chapter.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

CURTIS was continuing his operations down along the Arkansas river in 1863, and Wild Bill having reported for duty Curtis again employed him to strike the Confederate lines and especially to learn the designs of Van Dorn and Price, who were so quiet that Curtis suspicioned they were meditating plans for another invasion of Missouri. One of his chief concerns, and which gave rise to this conclusion, was the success of Quantrell and his band of guerillas, who were laying waste the western counties of Missouri and pillaging the people of eastern Kansas.

Taking up the burden of this third dangerous mission Bill rode directly across the country until he struck the old Santa Fe trail, which he followed three days, bringing him into the western part of Kansas; then striking due south he passed through the Indian Territory and en-

tered Texas, going thence east along the border to the southwestern corner of Arkansas where, after reaching Texarkana, he stopped a few days, representing himself as a Texas drover. From this point he rode eastward until he came to the house of an old negro near the post-office of Buffalo, in Ouachita county. Reaching the little old log cabin late in the afternoon, Bill dismounted, and entering into conversation with the aged darkey he discovered the house was occupied by only the old fellow and his wife. A series of questions soon convinced Bill that the negro was loyal at heart and could be depended on to keep a secret.

Shortly after his arrival supper was prepared by the old negro woman, consisting of genuine hoe-cake and crisply fried bacon, and the meal being concluded Bill interviewed his guests regarding the condition of their part of the country and the location of Confederate forces. He was pleased to learn that while these old people appeared extremely ignorant yet they had been very anxiously observant of the Confederate and Federal movements, and therefore were possessed of much information valuable to him.

On the following morning Bill arose early and going out to a stable on the premises, his own horse having been stabled the evening previous by the old darkey, he discovered a jackass of ancient countenance standing in that reverential and resigned position which only an ass can assume perfectly. An idea of great consequence immediately moved Bill to return to the house, disclose a part of his purposes to the sable old uncle, change his habit of dress, and make a goodly provision for safely entering the Confederate lines.

Said Bill to his colored host: "I see, uncle, you have a jackass in the stable, does he belong to you?"

"Yes, sah," responded the old man, "I'se had dat dare animule fo, de last ten yeahs; but he's gittin' a good deal like his marster now, not much 'count, sah; but I reckon ef he hadn't been so used up de Confeds would a had 'im afore dis."

"Yes," said Bill, "I guess that is so; he don't look like a very valuable brute, but at the same time he is such a curious looking specimen that I've got an idea he would suit me for a purpose I now have in view. How would you like to trade your jack for my horse?"

"Well, now, dat is a funny propersishun foh you to make, case I haint got nuffin' to give you to boot."

"But I don't want any boot; you bring out the jack and let my horse stay in the stable, if that kind of a trade will suit you."

"Yah, yah, yah; why, marster, you doan mean dat, does you? Afore God dat would be de mos' curiousest bargan I'se hearn on; why, I declaar ef the Confeds would see dat hoss in my stable dey'd want to know how I got 'im right away, and I guess dey would take me too in order to settle de title."

"I'll tell you how to do; if anybody wants to know anything about that horse, you tell them that he is a stray that you have taken up, and that you're expecting the owner along every day."

"Now, if you is a foolin' me go away, but ef you is in yarnest, why dar is de jack and I'll try and keep de hoss."

"Well, I'll just charge you one thing to boot, and that is, if you have an old suit of clothes about the house that you don't care to use much longer, will I take them; will you agree to that?"

"Yes, sah, I'll call de old woman and see what she's got tucked away in de loft. Nancy! oh, Nancy!" yelled

the old darkey. Hearing herself called, the old woman left her corn cake on the clapboard before the fire, and thrusting her bandana covered head through the door, responded: "What does you want, Silas?" "Why, I wants you to look on de peg by de chimbley and get me dat dar last Sunday-suit of geans, and bring it hayer."

The clothes were brought out in obedience to this command and submitted to Bill for inspection. There was a pair of pants of saffron complexion, with a respectable rent in the left knee; the vest was an indigo blue relieved by cross stripes of flaming red, and the coat was made with due regard for the ground color of the vest, but in matter of ornamentation the coat took a decided precedence, for, although the buttons bore a diversified character, they were, nevertheless, genuine brass and large enough for shields.

The clothes fitted Bill quite as well as he desired, and with a big hat made of course unbleached straw he was ready with his patient jackass for the campaign. He had purposely allowed his whiskers to grow to considerable length and his hair had put off the neatly combed polish by which he was so well known.

Having so completely disguised his usual appearance Bill felt that it would be impossible for anyone to distinguish him in a crowd of corner-store natives; so, setting out mounted on his novel conveyance, and carrying an old shot-gun, he traveled without fear of detection until he reached Pine Bluff, where a division of Van Dorn's army was stationed. After looking around the place one day he went up to head-quarters and offered his services as a private in the Confederate army. Upon presenting himself to a recruiting sergeant that official could not refrain from laughing heartily at the astonishing and grotesque figure standing before him.

"Well, sir," said the sergeant, "where the devil did you come from?"

"Oh," responded Bill, "I got a little cabin up here in the Ozarks, where I've been livin' in a patch o' clearin' with this here jack and Bowlegs for the last twenty year."

"Who is Bowlegs?" asked the sergeant.

"Why, look a here, mister," replied Bill, "haven't you



Wild Bill in Disguise.

never hearn o' Bowlegs, the greatest wildcat and bar killer in the whole o' Arkansaw? Bowlegs is my dog, and ef you'd a seed him two months ago tackle a catamount, up on huckleberry hill, bigger'n my jack, you'd a bet the last bristle on yer back that he could whip anything that ever wore hair or straddled the Devil's Backbone. You see, the neighborhood had been a losin' o' pigs an' calfs for a long time, though pigs an' calfs is a scarce article up on the hill, an'"—

"Well, never mind the dog," growled the officer; "we haven't time now to hear your account of Bowlegs; we'll take for granted that he is the best fighter on the Devil's Backbone (the Ozark range of mountains is sometimes thus called), but we want men now that can fight just like your dog. Do you harbor the suspicion that you can do as good fighting as Bowlegs, especially if we should set you on a drove of Yankees?"

"I think I mought make a full hand ef you'll fernish me with the amernition; I got plenty caps jest now, but my powder an' shot is kinder run low," replied Bill.

At this unsophisticated remark the sergeant and all those about him broke out in an almost uncontrollable fit of laughter, which lasted for several minutes; but during all their cachinations Bill stood in mute astonishment, as if he had done something which conclusively established the fact that he was the most stupendous fool on earth.

Recovering himself at length, the sergeant asked: "You don't suppose our soldiers fight with shot-guns, and such weapons as that you have in your hand, do you?"

Opening his eyes in apparent wonder, Bill replied: "On course I do, case hain't shot-guns better ner squirrel rifles by a durn'd sight?"

The conversation finally terminated by the enlistment of Bill and the appraisalment of his jackass, everyone supposing that the droll ignorance of the new recruit would furnish a constant diversion for the company to which he should be assigned.

After some weeks were spent in camp the division was ordered to Pine Bluff, Bill being a private in Co. I, under Capt. Levenson. Curtis, leading his army of the frontier, was also marching in the direction of Duvall's Bluff with the intention of cutting off and destroying the Confederate supplies collecting at that point.



Before reaching the Bluffs, marching overland, the Confederate troops were reinforced by three hundred men who had been reconnoitering in advance of Price. On the following day after this junction was made a corporal who had been with Price in the engagement near Perryville and was a witness to the famous ride made by Bill and Nat. Tucket, being attracted by the assumed eccentricities of the spy, finally discovered, under all his cunning disguise, the daring Wild Bill, whose name was on the lips of every Confederate in Missouri and Arkansas. The corporal lost no time in reporting his discovery, and in a trice a detail of twelve men dropped their loaded guns and covered the body of Bill so effectually that any attempt at escape would have resulted in certain death. A court-martial was at once organized and the spy placed on trial. His conviction was secured in an hour's time and he was sentenced to be shot on the following morning.

In a memorandum Bill made concerning this event he says: "The Rebs convicted me on mighty little evidence, and here I am now in a bad pickle; it may be that they will shoot me to-morrow, but somehow I feel that some means of escape will offer. Curtis must be very near, for he has been reported, in camp, as coming like the devil beating bark, on a straight trail for the Bluffs. Something tells me that I will get out of this, and this feeling gives me nerve. I'll keep a lookout and see what's what." How this entry was made in his journal, while he was under a close guard, is not explained, but it is probable that he wrote it after his escape to indicate his feelings while under conviction, when the chances of escape were least favorable.

Immediately after the trial was concluded—it being held in the evening while the division was encamped,—

Bill was removed to a small log hut, and to prevent the possibility of escape, as Van Dorn assumed, his arms were securely pinioned and a guard set over him to watch every movement.

About midnight a dreadful storm of wind and rain began, which raged with great violence until morning. Bill's guard being very much fatigued, owing to the long march during the day, and trusting too much in his ability to rouse himself at the slightest movement made by the prisoner, sat down beside the closed door and gradually dozed off to sleep. Bill, having his hands strongly tied, saw how easily he could escape had the gyves about his wrists been a little less tightly drawn; but every twist of his hands only served to break the skin under the unyielding thongs. This painful suspense and lapsing opportunity continued until nearly three o'clock in the morning, when golden fortune, who always gives his hand to the brave in their last extremity, disclosed to his sight the very slightly protruding handle of an old case-knife, the blade of which was hidden in the depths of an auger-hole. Most glorious vision! the bright portal of life! the realms of beatific possibility; aye, the smoothe pathway leading from the black shadows of death out into the gorgeous light of salvation! How precious must have appeared that old, worn-out, rusted, broken piece of steel! to the condemned spy it was worth more than all the castles of polished ivory that the fabled Arabian Magi could have created, "for what will a man not give to save his own life?"

Stealthily creeping from the corner in which he was seated, Bill drew himself by inches toward the old knife, while the beating of his heart sounded to him like the long roll call. Gradually he grew nearer and nearer, until at last, crouching for a moment, he arose with his back

against the log walls and seized the rusty handle in his pinioned hands. But still he was not free; unable to make much available use of his hands, he withdrew the knife and then pushed the handle into the auger-hole, leaving a small part of the blade out; he then began rubbing the ropes between his wrists across the dull and rusted blade, until after what seemed to him an age of



Wild Bill Surprises the Sleepy Sentinel.

hard labor he felt the cords loosen; they were cut and he was now a man with all the vigor God had so bounteously lodged in his well developed sinews.

Bill did not wait long after cleaving the ropes which bound his hands, to put into execution one of those bold and desperate methods which serve to make his name im-

perishable. Taking the old case-knife in his right hand, he sprang upon the slumbering guard and in an instant the rusted blade was thrust into the throat of the sleeping victim and his neck almost severed in twain. Not a word escaped from the unconscious sentinel as the rusty knife flashed across his throat and let out the life-blood. Bill quickly stripped the dead guard of coat and hat, and placing them upon himself, with musket in hand, he stealthily left the log house and by aid of the darkness made good his escape, gaining Curtis' army on the following day.

This really marvelous escape from death impressed every one acquainted with the circumstances, with the extraordinary good luck and strategy which seemed never to forsake Wild Bill, but this impression was specially conspicuous among Van Dorn's men, many of whom, being almost as ignorant as Bill had professed to be in joining the Confederate forces, honestly believed he was leagued with the devil and that he could not be killed.

---

## CHAPTER V.

AFTER finding himself secure in the Federal lines again, Bill immediately called on Gen. Curtis and imparted a great deal of useful information which resulted in much advantage to the Union forces, for the army moved at once and intercepted Van Dorn before he reached Duvall's Bluff. Here a hot battle was fought in which the Confederates were routed, a large amount of their stores captured, and the supply post occupied by the victorious Federals. But Bill positively refused to enter the ene-

my's lines again, because he was now so well known in the Confederate army operating west of the Mississippi that to make another such attempt would be subjecting himself to almost certain death. He continued scouting, however, for some time afterward, and frequently went in the guise of a Confederate officer in order to secure the confidence of southern sympathizers, from whom much useful knowledge concerning the movements of Confederate troops was from time to time obtained.

In 1864 Price made his second invasion into Missouri and Gen. Daviess was ordered to harass his rear until Curtis could return and reorganize a second campaign against the invaders. Southern Missouri had become the camping ground of Confederate detachments, and to operate against these bands Gen. Daviess established his headquarters at Rolla. Wild Bill, being well acquainted in Rolla, visited that place in the summer of 1864 and reported to headquarters for a commission to scout in the southern part of the State. Daviess was glad to secure his services, for several of the adjacent counties were seriously infested with independent bushwhackers claiming authority for their acts under Confederate commissions.

While the camp was quietly waiting for Curtis to report from some point in Missouri where a junction might be formed, on the 25th of July Bill mounted his horse and without acquainting any one with his purpose, resolved to make a private expedition through the southern part of Phelps county. He accordingly set out unaccompanied and rode directly south, passing by Pilot Knob and through Elk prairie, meeting no one and finding no evidence of hostile occupation. Near the post village of Lake Spring, in the timber skirting a tributary of the Meramec river, however, he suddenly came upon three

men well mounted and carrying carbines, with pistols in their outside belts. The trio, without proceeding by interrogatories to learn anything about Bill, commanded him to dismount, accompanying the order with a threat to shoot him if he delayed an instant. Without attempting any parley or considering the odds against him, Bill threw up his pistol, which he had in his right hand hanging on the off side of his horse, out of sight, and almost in the glance of an eye, he shot the three with such precision that each tumbled to the ground with a mortal wound. One of the bushwhackers, however, while in the throes of death, summoned enough strength to raise on his elbow and fire at Bill, the bullet striking his saddle bow but doing him no personal injury.

The three now riderless horses, frightened by the firing, ran away, but fortunately all kept close together. Bill went at once in pursuit of the animals, one of which was a beautiful little black mare which he was specially anxious to possess. The chase continued for nearly six hours before Bill succeeded in capturing the three horses, but as they were running in the direction of Rolla, no time was lost. Tying the heads of the animals together he led them back to camp as prizes of war, making due report to his commanding officer.

Gen. Daviess, not having been made acquainted with Bill's expedition, was at a loss to determine what had become of him, when suddenly witnessing his re-appearance with three horses, he at once concluded that Bill had been engaged in making reprisals from non-belligerents.

Assuming a stern look the General enquired of him: "You have been out of camp for four days without leave; where have you been operating, and where did you get those horses?"

Bill looked for a moment steadily at the General, whose gaze, instead of relaxing, bore sterner evidence of his belief that the horses had been stolen. Feeling keenly the suspicion, Bill answered in an imperious manner, "I'm not a private soldier, and as a scout I go where I please. The horses have been turned over to you, therefore I must say it's none of your d—d business where I got them."

This insubordinate attitude and insulting language threw Gen. Daviess into a violent fit of anger, and intending some severe punishment he ordered Bill's arrest and confinement in the guard house. The command was promptly obeyed and the cavalier scout was hurriedly conveyed to prison. On the same evening, about nine o'clock, as the General was riding around the post he was astonished at seeing Bill salute him from the sidewalk. Without saying a word to the mysteriously liberated scout he rode directly to the guard house and in a thundering tone demanded of the guards why Will Bill had been permitted to escape. His astonishment greatly increased, however, when they assured the General that Bill was in the guard house; but an examination soon showed that they had been cleverly deceived; for it was soon discovered that one of the other prisoners, whose term of service expired that evening, had changed clothes with Bill and himself remained in durance in order to give the popular scout his liberty.

This devoted comradeship so affected Gen. Daviess that he at once pardoned the man who had contrived Bill's escape, and ordering both men to be sent to his headquarters, he repaired there himself to give them an unexpected greeting.

When Bill and his devoted friend entered the General's office they were received with the greatest cordiality and

invited to fill up on some extra cogniac used by the General only on special occasions. After speaking in the most feeling manner of the value of true comradeship, and complimenting the friendship which prompted one of his guests to sacrifice his own liberty to secure that of the other, the General turned to Bill and in a courteous and defferential manner asked him to relate the adventure by which he had come into possession of the horses. First excusing his hasty and insubordinate reply made during the day, Bill told the General all the circumstances of his private expedition, and in proof of his assertion he asked Gen. Daviess to send a party of men with him back to the spot where the fight took place, agreeing to produce the bodies of his victims. Accordingly on the following day a detail of his men accompanied Bill back to the banks of the Meramuc tributary where the bodies of the three bushwhackers were found and properly buried.

After the events here recorded Gen. Daviess became one of Bill's warmest friends, and had many other proofs of his great valor and services before the campaign of 1864 closed.

The little black mare captured from the bushwhackers, by Bill's urgent request, he was permitted to retain, and this animal afterward became one of the most famous horses ever bred in America. Being black as a raven, with limbs rounded with all the beautiful symmetry seen in the choicest blooded animals, she would attract marked attention among all the horses of the world. Bill gave her the name of Black Nell, and giving much care to her training, she became the heroine of many adventures, which will be recorded in a subsequent chapter.

Early in January, 1865, Gen. Curtis, having again driven Price and Shelby out of Missouri, established his headquarters at Fort Leavenworth, where he could more



readily observe the movements of guerrillas who continued harassing convoys, couriers and weak posts in eastern Kansas and western Missouri. Wild Bill continued in the service as chief of scouts; but he was employed a greater part of the time in Missouri.

In February, Man-to-yu-kee (Conquering Bear), one of the sub-chiefs of the Sioux Indians, a friendly tribe



Man-to-yu-kee (Conquering Bear.)

under the command of Gen. Jim Lane, came into Fort Leavenworth and reported to Gen. Curtis the encampment of five hundred Choctaw warriors ten miles west of Lawrence, on the Kaw river. The Choctaw and Cherokee Indians, also some of the Creeks and Osages, were employed as soldiers by the Confederates, and although they performed very little service, yet the entire country,

especially eastern Kansas, was dreadfully excited over an anticipated Indian massacre of whites. Consequently, when Conquering Bear became the messenger of such news, reporting the fierce Choctaws in such close proximity, there was no little apprehension created even in the mind of the gallant Curtis.

Sending for Wild Bill, whose acquaintance with the Indian character was thorough, Curtis recited the facts as reported by Conquering Bear, and then asked him what course of action he would advise.

The reply was fully characteristic of the man's readiness to brave any danger where his services might prove of value. Said Bill:

"The Indian is a mighty uncertain animal, and those that profess the greatest friendship are very frequently the most deadly enemies. I'll tell you my idea: You send me back to the Sioux camp with this chief, and before I return, you can depend on it I will know how many Choctaws are near Lawrence and what they are up to. If I'm not back here in four days, just put it down that I've dropped my scalp."

Curtis replied: "It looks to me as though such a trip would be very hazardous if the hostile Indians are really near Lawrence, unless you should take one or two hundred men with you."

"I don't want any one with me," answered Bill, "except Conquering Bear, and if he deceives me or is trying to lay some devilish trap, then one of us will lift the other's hair. No, I will only take Black Nell, and am prepared to leave here for the Indian camp early to-morrow morning."

"Well," responded Curtis, "if you think it possible to penetrate the Indian camp, or learn the exact location and intention of the Choctaws, I think the importance

of learning these facts warrant me in sending you ; therefore, whatever you may require it shall be provided, and I can only hope for your safe return."

Bill sent for the Indian chief, and after acquainting him with Gen. Curtis' desire, said : " I shall go with you directly to your people, and then I shall expect you to guide me to the hostile camp ; but remember, if you deceive me in the least thing, one of us will have to die."

The Indian made many assuring promises that his loyalty to the Union and enmity to the Choctaws alone prompted his desire to lead the Federal troops into the enemy's camp.

On the following day, pursuant to the arrangements, Wild Bill and the Indian started for Lawrence, which place they reached the same evening, and shortly afterward went through the Sioux camp. Leaving there after night, the two proceeded westward until suddenly, in the darkness, Conquering Bear gave a singular whoop, and, hiding quickly in the bushes, left Bill surrounded by a band of Choctaws. The treachery of the Sioux chief was now plainly apparent, and Bill saw that he had been purposely led inside the hostile pickets. The Indians rushed out from every side, but the darkness was so profound that Bill was screened from his enemies, three of whom he killed when they came too close. His little black mare, with the intelligence of a scout herself, was so obedient that by a tap of the hand she lay down or ran from covert to covert as Bill desired. The Indians, in the meantime, ran upon one another in the darkness, being unable to locate their would-be victim, and by a series of strategies, such as giving the Indian whoop and other signals which Bill well knew, he managed to elude the Choctaws, and finally escaped without receiving the least injury.

After an absence of nearly four days Bill returned to Fort Leavenworth and made due report to Gen. Curtis

of the circumstances of his trip, and thereupon asked for a leave of absence for one week. His request being granted, Bill went directly to Lawrence and began active endeavors looking to a personal meeting with Conquering Bear. Being well acquainted with the language and peculiarities of the Sioux, Bill soon found opportunity for sating his revenge. A young warrior from the tribe being seen walking the streets of Lawrence, Bill approached him cleverly and by a liberal treatment to whisky and gew-gaws soon gained his confidence and friendship. Through this intermediary Bill was not long in reaching Conquering Bear, who, through promises of a secret reward awaiting him at a spot three miles east of the town, was easily allured to a sequestered place unaccompanied except by the young fellow who had faithfully followed Bill's instructions.

The two Indians were proceeding slowly as if expecting to meet with some persons bearing rich rewards, when suddenly Bill rose out of his hiding place and confronted the dusky traitor. For a moment they stood perfectly still, eyeing each other, one filled with fear, the other with desire for revenge. Drawing from his belt two pistols Bill threw one to Conquering Bear and told him to defend himself; but the Indian knew the deadly aim of his antagonist and refused to fight with the pistol. Bill then told him he had either to fight or suffer the death of the dog he was. Conquering Bear tried to parley, but being forced to accept immediate terms for a fight, he at length chose the knife, the long, keen-pointed bowie, with a blade two inches in width and an edge sharp as death's visage. Men on the border invariably carry this desperate weapon, and Conquering Bear was an expert in its use, but not more proficient than was Bill; each could throw the blade through the body of a one-inch sapling

at the distance of ten paces, and in the manual exercise with a bowie they were truly professional.

Bill quickly accepted the terms proposed by the Indian and in a cool and calculating manner selected a level spot and then instructed the Indian youth to prepare it for the duel. This he did by kicking off the leaves and twigs and drawing a circle ten feet in diameter in which the contestants were to meet each other. The arrangements having been perfected, Bill stepped inside the circle and called to Conquering Bear, but the Indian acting as though fear had transfixed him, stood motionless until Bill threatened to shoot him dead in his tracks if he did not engage in combat at once. This threat aroused him, and with a lithesome spring he leaped inside the imaginary enclosure, his great knife gleaming in his right hand, which was raised to a level with his face. The two mortal enemies as they stood for a moment calculating the opportunities for a first deadly thrust, were objects of really magnificent terror. Such beauty of physical proportions and such an exhibition of marvellous courage were doubtless never before witnessed in a personal combat as, with breasts bared to the steel, the two antagonists glared at each other a moment before commencing the deadly onset. Bill was the first to make a motion, stepping forward quickly one pace and delivering a feint; the Indian drew back, but partly stooped as if to make a rush, then like two enraged lions they sprang at each other, meeting in the center of the ring, and catching the points of their knives they remained clashed together for several minutes. There now succeeded a violent struggle, their dreadful weapons remaining edge to edge, while the left hand of each was around the other's body, every muscle standing out in great ridges, evidencing the terrible strain produced by the efforts of each to throw

or disadvantage the other. Like two fighting bull-dogs when both secure a strong hold, clinging tenaciously until exhaustion forces a relinquishment of the grasp; it was thus that Bill and his antagonist clung to each other until tired nature caused a separation. Their eyes, however, kept faithful watch during a brief respite in the encounter.

After a lapse of fully ten minutes the Indian, having recovered from his first fright, was the first to advance for a re-engagement, but Bill showed equal anxiety to begin the desperate work, and both being intensely enraged the second encounter produced frightful results. They came together with terrific force, but with marvellous dexterity each expert caught the knife of the other on the edge of their respective weapons. But they did not clinch this time, for they now foresaw only exhaustion in such tactics which might permit an almost resistless execution of the one of the least endurance, each doubting his own superiority. A few moments were spent in feints, change of positions, backing and advancing until conceiving his opportunity, Bill gave a terrible thrust at the Indian's heart, but a buckle on the swarthy warrior's breast diverted the blow from its purpose; the knife was deflected slightly after striking, but went downward with such force that it cut through the Indian's jacket and opened a fearful gash, several inches in length, in his side, from which the blood gushed in torrents. But in giving his enemy this dreadful wound Bill did not escape without serious injury. Seeing the thrust made, the Indian struck hard at Bill's heart, but the knife was caught in the scout's left arm and struck to the bone near the shoulder point and stripped the flesh half way to his elbow. From these two wounds the ground soon became covered with blood, and yet the fight



WILD BILL'S DUEL WITH CONQUERING BEAR.





continued while the strength of each flowed rapidly away. The Indian grew weak very fast now, and realizing that if victory came to him it must be through an effort speedily made, he thrust at Bill with great violence and precision, but the dextrous scout skillfully parried the effort and the next instant his knife went through the neck of Conquering Bear, splitting through the tendons, and cutting the jugular vein. With a convulsive twinge of the body and straightening of the right arm the Indian fell forward, burying his tightly clutched knife in the ground to the hilt.

The young Indian who had remained a horrified spectator of this most terrible of all personal conflicts, seeing the chief fall dead went up to Bill at once and bandaged his wounded arm, so that the flow of blood was partly stopped. Bill returned to Lawrence and on the same day left for Kansas City, where he placed himself in charge of his old physician and friend, Dr. Joshua Thorne. But the wound was an obstinate one, and caused him pain and annoyance for years afterward.

This memorable battle was fought on the 22d day of January, 1865. The object of Conquering Bear's treachery in trying to compass the death of Wild Bill, was, no doubt, to obtain a reward that had been offered by some of Bill's enemies to accomplish their cowardly purposes. These rewards were very frequent immediately after the close of the war, some of which and the circumstances under which they were offered, will be described in subsequent chapters.

The Indian boy who had served Bill in this matter was duly recompensed; in addition to a liberal receipt of money, Bill took him to Kansas City, gave him many advantages and finally went back with him to the Sioux, upon the Niobrara river, where their reservation lay.

## CHAPTER VI.

AFTER the close of the civil war, Wild Bill decided to quit the States for a while and pass a season on the Niobrara trapping for beaver and otter. He was encouraged in this decision by the young Indian who had aided him so materially in satisfying his vengeance against Conquering Bear. This young buck whom Bill, in his diary, calls Joe, had returned with his tribe, after the close of their operations along the Kaw river, to their reservation in Nebraska, and had frequently begged Bill to pass a season with him on the Niobrara. After the killing of Man-to-yu-kee, the Sioux entertained a very exalted opinion of Bill, particularly because the dead chief had been exceedingly unpopular among his own people. These several circumstances, added to which game for the trap was reported as being abundant on the Niobrara, which ran through the Sioux reservation, influenced Bill to depart for that country in the fall of 1865.

Among the Sioux was a sister of Indian Joe, named Mary Logan, whom Bill declares was a direct descendant of the great chief of that name, though there was a goodly amount of white blood in her veins. This girl was about eighteen years of age when Bill first became acquainted with her, and he rarely mentioned her without going into raptures over her beauty.

Within a few days after he first met Mary Logan he could not avoid observing the love which was lighted in her heart; she lingered about him as though influenced by some magnetic or mesmerie force; hungered for the honey of his words and her eyes bespoke the admiration in which she held him. Her bounteous hospitality and persuasive words, together with the persistent solicitations

of her brother Joe, finally induced Bill to make her home his own during the season. This home was only a little log cabin containing a single room, with a large fireplace, before which hung, almost constantly, many pieces of jerked venison, antelope and buffalo meat. It was not such a place as love usually selects to build her bowers, but this Indian maiden admired the white face, and more especially the comely, symmetrical features of Wild Bill, whose fame as the most daring of Western heroes, had been disseminated among every Indian tribe west of the Mississippi river.

Being unable at last to endure his absence, Mary Logan begged Bill to allow her to accompany him on his rounds in examining his traps, and to be with him on his frequent hunts, a privilege which he gladly permitted, for the girl was very handsome, excellent company, and so devoted to him that her constant care was for his happiness.

The cabin in which the Logans and Wild Bill lived, was so circumscribed in its limits that the single room was made to subserve all the purposes of an Indian family, which are, of course, but few. This intimate companionship continued for a period of six months, during which time Bill had taught the girl how to read and write, indifferently but yet intelligibly. Notwithstanding this truly remarkable intimacy, in many particulars equally close as the most devoted man and wife, Bill always declared that the girl never lost her virtue, that her honesty was almost phenomenal, for she would readily have sacrificed her life rather than have forfeited the jewel of her chastity. There is something in this poor Indian girl's character which is pathetically beautiful; an uncultivated bud in the great garden of God's diversified creation; reared in her own simplicity and

protected by no words of wise counsel or warning, nothing but the shield of her innate innocence. Her love was pure as the fountain at its source, as sweet as the nectar of heaven's own distillation, as coy and confiding as the soul that gives itself into the keeping of a loved one.

The trapping season having closed and spring time drawing on apace, Wild Bill bade his prairie maiden adieu and returned to Missouri, but before proceeding to a description of his subsequent adventures it is interesting to follow the now despondent Indian girl, for her life took on many grievous vicissitudes after her parting from her white lover, who was the ideal of noble manhood in her estimation.

In the succeeding fall (1866) a fellow named Rogers, from St. Louis, found Mary Logan among her people, still on the Niobrara, and being captivated by her beautiful face and figure proposed marriage, which she accepted, not because his affection was reciprocated, but solely because he promised to take her with him to St. Louis where they would make their home. The poor girl had never ceased grieving for Wild Bill and she believed that, living in Missouri, whither she knew he had gone, she would find opportunities to see him often. Mary Logan therefore sacrificed her maidenhood and went to the States as Mrs. Rogers.

By singular coincidence very soon after reaching St. Louis she did meet Wild Bill in one of the numerous parks of that city, and in the meeting her joy was boundless. When he left her again it was with the promise that a correspondence should be maintained between the two.

Several months elapsed, during which time a weekly exchange of letters passed between Mrs. Rogers and Bill without the husband entertaining even a suspicion of

such a fact. Much evil, however, was destined to flow from this pleasant correspondence. Bill's letters were so precious in her sight that, instead of prudently destroying them, she kept each one as though it were a priceless treasure. One of these communications at length fell into the hands of the husband, and as the language was of a decidedly affectionate character, the justly jealous husband at once accused his Indian wife of infidelity, treachery, duplicity and outrageous conduct; all this she bore with perfect resignation, but when he began the



Wild Bill and Mrs. Rogers in the Park.

same kind of abuse against Wild Bill she flew at him with all the inflamed indignation of her nature and a domestic scene ensued. Still they lived together, but shortly afterward removed to Kansas City, where a second letter of Bill's being discovered, the same scene was re-enacted as that which had transpired over the first discovery at St. Louis. Rogers having severely chastised his wife and threatened Wild Bill with death, Mary resolved to kill her husband. To accomplish this she had

recourse to poison, mixing it with his coffee, and soon after Rogers had drank the fatal potion he was a corpse. All these facts she wrote to Bill and then disappeared, going back to her former Indian life, it is supposed, but so completely did she conceal her identity that Bill never again heard of her. It is possible that the sore heart which gave her such great distress—finding that she could never become the wife of the man she loved dearest of all on earth—finally admonished her to find rest and peace in a suicide's death.

Upon his return to the States Wild Bill went directly to Springfield, Mo., where he soon after engaged in a duel with one of the most desperate men that ever started a graveyard. At this time (1867) Springfield was the place of rendezvous for scores of roughs, gamblers and dangerous characters generally. In one respect it was a meeting place for the desperado element created by the civil war. The southern half of Missouri had been strongly inclined toward secession, and the Confederate forces had been augmented by many companies recruited below the Mason and Dixon line, and especially from the district immediately adjacent to Springfield. When the war closed, of course these discharged soldiers returned to their homes with the spirit of Southern sympathy still uppermost, while defeat had only served to increase their bitterness toward those whose political sentiments were in sympathy with the North.

Wild Bill was known (if not personally, at least by reputation) to every man, woman and child in and about Springfield, and his enemies—bitter, uncompromising, deadly foes—were numbered by scores; yet he lingered about the place as though the danger in so doing had become an irresistible allurement. But one of the principal attractions about Springfield, to him, was the unre-

stricted gambling carried on in nearly every other house on the business streets. The place had literally become a paradise for sporting characters, of which class Bill was not only a member in good standing, but occupied a distinguished position. He gambled with all the naturalness that characterizes a duckling when it first strikes water—not so much for profit, perhaps, as for the excitement it afforded.

Though he was constantly surrounded by numerous enemies who would have given half their future for his life, yet they stood in awe of his cool intrepidity, the precision of his aim, the charmed life which seemed to have preserved him for more gallant acts, and the proud carriage of his person which told so plainly that he knew nothing of fear. Any other man than he would have been dragged to the nearest tree and throttled, while a crowd of jeering desperadoes would have either lent a ready hand or stood by and applauded the deed; but the bark of his pistol meant the bite of a bullet, and men rarely become so lost to discretion as to fail in their respect for leaden pellets.

Some time during the summer, a terror to the neighborhood, named Dave Tutt (formerly a spy in the Confederate service), came to Springfield—some said for the express purpose of killing Bill—and at once threw himself into the gambling element of the place, and per consequence, soon met Wild Bill. The two engaged in a fifty-dollar limit game of poker in the second-story of a building fronting the north side of the public square. Bill played in bad luck and lost several hundred dollars, and on the last hand he called when the bet was twenty-five dollars more than he could put up. Being unable to discharge the debt at that moment, he made a memorandum of the amount and bade Tutt good-night.

After Bill had retired to his room he resolved never to play in a game with Tutt again, as the suspicion just then dawned upon him that he had been cheated. But he kept his own counsel, and on the following day borrowed fifty dollars more of Tutt, and with this money he soon afterward raised another handsome stake.

Three evenings after his first game with the ex-Confederate spy Bill was in the same gambling room and there he again met Tutt, who proposed another game of poker. To this Bill objected, but in such manner as led Tutt to believe that he was no match for such a dexterous player. Tutt then offered to stake a friend against Bill, and this proposition being approved the two began to play. Before beginning the game, however, Bill drew a large gold watch from his pocket, and laying it on the table before him, said to his partner: "Now I'll play you a twenty-five dollar limit until one of us is broken, or until twelve o'clock; at that time I must quit, and therefore want this fact understood at the beginning."

Bill played this time in such excellent luck that Tutt's friend required frequent staking, and in a couple of hours' time his winnings were over five hundred dollars. Tutt began to show signs of reluctance in putting up any more for his unlucky friend, and in a tone betraying much anger said:

"Bill, you are now ahead of this game enough to pay me that fifty dollars I loaned you, and also that forty dollars I won off you Tuesday night, and I want the money right now," at the same time striking the table with his fist.

"All right, Dave," responded Bill, "here is the fifty dollars I borrowed, and now here is the *twenty-five* dollars I owe you on the bet I called Tuesday night."

"That won't do, Bill," replied Tutt, "you owe me



fifteen dollars more, and I intend to have it right here, or you won't get this watch again," taking up Wild Bill's watch and shoving it into his pocket.

Bill arose from the table and looking Tutt in the eye very coolly remarked: "Well, Dave, I'll pay you every cent I owe; here is my memorandum book and you saw me enter the amount I overbet at the time; it was *twenty-five* dollars, not forty."

Tutt now began to manifest great rage and called Bill several vile names, while all in the room fairly held their breath in anticipation of a mortal combat. But they were disappointed. Without betraying the least excitement, Bill replied to Tutt: "I don't want any row in this gentleman's house, but, Dave, you had better put that watch back on the table or somebody will get badly hurt. I'll leave this matter to the boys who were present when you won the twenty-five dollars, and if they say it was forty dollars I'll pay you the money, but not otherwise."

Tutt only pursed up his lip at Bill, and turning about started out of the room, at the same time saying: "I'll just keep this watch all the same, and if you want it bad enough you can meet me in the public square tomorrow morning at nine o'clock, for I intend to carry it across the square at that hour."

"You'll never get across that place with my watch unless dead men can walk," replied Bill; and thus the two parted, Tutt taking the gold time-piece with him.

This singular dialogue astonished the gamblers present as they were never before. Some began to think that Bill's courage was chiefly on paper, and that he was really afraid of Tutt. But the true reason an encounter was not precipitated in the room at the time was undoubtedly the fact, which both realized, that even an attempt

to draw a pistol would have resulted in the certain death of each; because they were both skilled in the use of weapons and a death wound would not have prevented a return shot.

On the following morning (Saturday, September 12th) nearly the entire male population of Springfield and vicinity, hearing of the threatened duel, assembled about the public square at an early hour. The law-abiding and peace-preserving class was too small, or indisposed, to restrain the two men from fighting to the death in the



Wild Bill Satisfies the Natives.

most prominent spot of the town. In fact any attempt at interference would not have been tolerated. The event promised altogether too much amusement for the crowd to endure a postponement.

Promptly at nine o'clock Dave Tutt stepped out from the crowd on the west side of the square, and holding up the watch so that every one could see it, made some bravado remarks and started toward the center of the then enclosed place, carrying a large navy pistol in his right hand. Bill was equally prompt, and advanced

toward Tutt briskly, scarcely showing the ivory-handled pistol which he nearly covered with his hand. When within ten paces of each other Tutt was the first to raise his pistol, and instantly there were two reports which rang out in such quick succession as caused many who were unable to secure a good view, to believe, for a moment, that only one shot had been fired. There was no doubt concerning the result, however, for Tutt dropped his pistol, and clapping both hands over his heart fell forward without uttering a word. The bullet from his pistol whistled harmlessly by Bill's head and buried itself in an opposite building, where the mark may still be seen. The instant his pistol was discharged, and without noting the result, Bill wheeled in his tracks and, pointing his pistol at Tutt's friends, coolly asked, "Are you satisfied?" He expected a general attack from his old enemies, and was therefore fully prepared to face any consequences, but while they showed their weapons there were none in the crowd bold enough to appeal the result before them.

Bill was arrested directly after the shooting, but even in a place where he had few friends and many enemies, the respect for his daring nature was such that at a preliminary examination he was discharged upon the ground of self-defense, and the grand-jury never took cognizance of the tragedy which was played so true to nature before a town for an audience.

## CHAPTER VII.

LEAVING Springfield, soon after the killing of Tutt, Bill went to Nebraska, where he again engaged in trapping, but only for a brief period, owing to an incident which made it judicious for him to leave that country, and which may be described as follows: Having tried for beaver on several of the creeks of Nebraska without meeting favorable results, he changed his quarters with the intention of testing some of the branches in the southeastern part of the then Territory. Reaching Jefferson county Bill chanced upon a country saloon which derived a patronage from wayfarers and cow-boys. Hitching his horse he went into the saloon and called for a drink. In the place at the time were half a dozen herders, all in a partial state of intoxication—that condition which invites either a fight or a treat with the same desire.

In response to Bill's order the bar-keeper set out a glass and the usual black bottle, at the same time giving such a look as indicated the inquiry, "See here, stranger, what are you a doin' in these here diggins?" Four of the cow-boys, seeing Bill in the act of taking a treat all to himself, got up from the boxes on which they had been sitting and began to interview the new-comer. Bill gave no heed to their insults, but just as he was in the act of raising the glass to his lips one of the herders, anxious to test the stranger's pluck, gave Bill such a sudden push in the back that the liquid was dashed all over his face, his hat fell off, and in the momentum he struck the counter so hard that it was nearly turned over.

Without uttering a word Bill wheeled about and struck the curiously inclined fellow a blow that sent him on the

fly over three or four boxes, and into the corner, where he lay limp and bleeding like a stricken ox. The other herders were now in for a fight and were bound to have it; Bill tried to pacify them and show the justification of his act, but his mild language only excited them the more. Seeing that some shooting had to be done, Bill proposed to fight any four of the men with pistols at a distance of five or fifteen paces, just as they might choose. This proposition was readily accepted, with the provision that the bar-keeper should act as umpire, giving the



A Duel with Four Men.

word when to fire. A distance of fifteen paces was duly marked off and the four men took positions five feet apart, each party being allowed to shoot when the word "fire" should be given, and then to advance and fire at will.

The bar-keeper, who was a bald-headed, cross-eyed specimen of uncivilized villainy, pronounced the affair a delightful little sporting event, and with a doubtful smile on his ugly face stood in the doorway of his saloon and shouted:

"Are you all ready? One, two, three—fire!"

Before the last word had died from his lips Bill had killed the man on the left, but at the same time he received a wound in the right shoulder which caused his arm to fall uselessly by his side. It required but an instant, however, to snatch the pistol in his left hand, and being ambidextrous his fatal precision dropped the other three men with as many shots.

Examination disclosed the fact that three of the men were shot in the brain and must have died instantly; the other was struck in the right cheek and a large portion of his jaw was carried away, but he survived, and was living three years ago (1878) in Kansas City. The names of the four men were Seth Beeber, Jim Slater, Frank Dowder, and Jack Harkness, the latter being the survivor of that terrible fight.

Bill's wound gave him much pain, but notwithstanding this and the apparent kindness of the bar-keeper and others in the saloon, who carefully bandaged the injured limb, Bill very wisely concluded that the locality was now decidedly too insalubrious for him to remain thereabouts. On the same day he set out on his favorite black "Nell" for Kansas City, where he arrived on the 29th of December, seven days after the fight occurred. His wound had become very much worse owing to neglect, and for two months he was confined to his room, suffering great pain in the meantime, but before spring his recovery was so far accomplished that he was able to join the expedition against Black Kettle.

This expedition was organized to punish the Cheyennes who had left their reservation and started upon a career of brutal atrocities. They had murdered many settlers in western Kansas, participating with their northern brothers in the dreadful massacre on the Republican river, and then separating continued their depredations along the Wachita and Canadian rivers.

Two commands, one under Gen. Primrose and the other under Gen. Carr, were sent out after the perpetrators of these malignant, inhuman crimes. Wild Bill was made chief of scouts under the former, and Buffalo Bill filled the same responsible position under Gen. Carr; subsequently, however, the two commands were consolidated, and Wild Bill was made first assistant chief of scouts under Buffalo Bill. The Indians were hotly pursued for more than one month before a decisive engagement could be precipitated. Early in March, '69, the Cheyennes were brought to bay on the north side of the Wachita river, near the Antelope Hills in Indian Territory, and a memorable battle was the result. The Indians were found encamped in a thick woods, and so strong was their position that the most desperate fighting was required to dislodge them. Black Kettle, one of the ablest chiefs that ever led a body of rapacious Cheyennes, was in command of the Indians, and so powerful was his very name that many renegades from the Arraphoes and Kiowas, under Little Raven and Satanta, had joined their fortunes with him. The fight was begun by a charge from the front under Primrose, while Carr executed a simultaneous flank movement and attacked the Indians in the rear with such force that they were driven from their first position. This advantage the troops followed up speedily, and though the loss had been very severe, every man in the command felt the importance of now doing his full duty, however great the sacrifice. The woods resounded with the yells of charging squadrons, and soon squads of Indians were flying from covert to covert like frightened animals in a corral of hunters. Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill were the heroes of that day, and their deadly rifles did the execution of an entire company; without regard for the danger they incurred, each

rode into the very midst of the Indians, and with such destructive effect that they are credited with having killed no less than fifty of the red-skins. But it was reserved for Wild Bill to win the greater honor. Black Kettle, realizing how disastrous had become the battle, sought safety in precipitate flight; but he was espied by Wild Bill, who ran a gauntlet of spears, tomahawks and rifles, and, catching the famous chief, plunged a bowie-knife through his back and heart. But in performing this desperate feat, Bill was struck through the left hip with a spear and nearly unhorsed. So pressed was he by more than a hundred Indians, that the trophy of a chief's scalp could not be secured; and but for the plucky aid of Buffalo Bill, who plunged in among the Indians and dealt death with a lavish hand, Wild Bill would certainly have been killed. His wound soon became so painful from the effects of the poison with which the spear was dipped, that after the battle was concluded it became necessary to convey him back to Ft. Hays in an ambulance. The Indians were so badly beaten that very few escaped, and those few soon afterward came in and surrendered. All the squaws and children of the tribe were taken, among the number being a sister of Black Kettle, who was afterward killed at Hays under peculiarly lamentable circumstances, as will be found described in the life of Capt. Payne.

Wild Bill's condition did not improve, and being in great need of complete rest for some time in order to insure recovery, he resolved to visit his old home in Illinois. The wound received in his Nebraska duel had not yet entirely healed, and the fistula formed from the cut received in his fight with Conquering Bear was still suppurating and painful.

On the 3d of April Wild Bill returned to the





WILD BILL KILLING BLACK KETTLE.



home he had left in his approaching manhood, more than thirteen years before. His aged mother was in the doorway to welcome him, but there were so many changes in the appearance of mother and son that only the same hearts remained to give recognition. From the boy whose prowess and adventure had never extended beyond the occupation of wolf-scalping before his departure, James Hiekok had been transformed into "Wild Bill," whose wonderful deeds were on the lips of every American and had interested every reader of border history. The prophecy he made when first reading the life of Kit Carson had been fulfilled and a world had recognized his intrepid daring, his unexampled strategy and his peerless character in the civilizing process through which the great West was passing. He had returned, laden with his honors, to rest a while under the roof which had sheltered his infancy, and to stray along the Vermillion's banks, wooing remembrance of his youthful days and looking backward over the path which ambition had made him travel. Under the loving care of his mother and affectionate kindred, Wild Bill soon felt returning strength and convalescence.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

Two months passed pleasantly away with Bill, for from the hard service he had so long endured, the delicate attention he now received was like soothing balm to his wounds, and there was a rapid recovery. But the restless spirit soon became conscious of its restrictions in the old home of his nativity, and with recovery came the

desire for new adventures on the wild wilderness of the Western prairies. Before returning West, he concluded to visit one of his boyhood friends named Heman Baldwin, who was a resident of Chicago. Upon reaching that city Baldwin, having been apprised of his intended visit, met Bill at the depot and gave him a warm reception, after which the two drove around to the principal places of interest, and Bill was introduced to several of the most prominent gentlemen in the city.

On the evening of the second day after Bill's arrival in Chicago, in the company of his friend Baldwin, he went into the billiard hall that was attached to the St. James hotel. Being dressed in the genuine garb of a frontiersman, buckskin clothes trimmed with leather fringe, he naturally attracted much attention everywhere on the streets, but at no place did the curiosity of Chicagoans display itself so much as in the billiard hall; men actually left off in the midst of their games to gaze enquiringly at the singular stranger, and Bill soon found himself the cynosure of all eyes.

Among those who made up the crowd in the saloon were seven compatriots of hoodlumism, fellows whose airy tongues, swaggering style, and noses bedizened with the torch-light of whisky's ensign, indicated plainly their belligerent and crime loving proclivities. They fixed their gaze on Bill with curious interest until the seven concluded it would afford them much satisfaction and redound no little to their reputation to give the stranger a severe threshing—just by way of illustrating how tame Chicago boys could handle the wild plainsman.

In order to introduce the social affray one of the party accosted Bill in the following manner:

“Say, you, leather breeches, where did you come from?”

"I came from a section of country where everybody minds his own business, a place you never saw," responded Bill.

"Why, the Indian scalper is a little sharp; but there are some feathers in his wings that ought to be cut," another of the roughs suggested.

To this second insult Bill paid no attention because he anticipated the object of the crowd and was anxious to avoid trouble. A third one, however, considering his turn had come to say something witty, addressed Bill:

"I suppose that everybody in your country dresses in raw-hide and washes every morning in a pot of fresh blood; ain't that so, Wild-Bull-of-the-Woods?"

"Well, a country of that kind is better than the one you came from, where there isn't a fellow who knows his own father," replied Bill.

This cutting rebuke created a perfect tempest among the irascible hoodlums. Another quickly walked toward Bill and fairly spit out between his teeth the inquiry:

"Do you mean to say that our mothers are not honest women?"

"I mean," answered Bill, "if they are it was d—d bad business they got into when you were begotten."

The words were scarcely out of his mouth before the bullies gathered billiard cues and assailed Bill with an expressed determination to take his scalp in a manner peculiar to the lake-side city.

Although still lame and sore from the wounds in his hip and arm, Bill forgot these in the fight which ensued. In a second he had grabbed a cue, which was as quickly broken convenient to his hand, and then the trouble became at once very serious. The fight, in fact, was a counterpart of Gilhooley's affair at Tim Finnigan's

wake, when a shillalah was worth a crown a second. Baldwin, Bill's friend, was, of course, engaged and did splendid service as a reserve, wielding a cue with much dexterity. Bill was struck several times on the head and arms, one of the strokes cutting a long, deep gash in his forehead, but he fought with the same cool desperation which had brought him so much glory and a decisive victory at Rock Creek.

At the end of ten minutes the seven Chicago braggarts were extended on the floor, each nursing bruises and cuts the evidence of which will abide with them through life. They had thoroughly interviewed "leather breeches" and definitely determined the product of that queer country from whence the stranger had come. They each felt like the little barefooted boy who delivered a vicious kick at an old plug hat only to find that under it were purposely concealed three big bricks.

Bill returned to Troy Grove on the following morning with his head well bandaged, wearing painful mementoes of his Chicago visit. While recuperating before starting for the West again, he received a letter from Vice-President Henry Wilson, as follows:

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 17th, 1869.

JAMES B. HICKOK, ESQ.:

DEAR SIR: A party consisting of several gentlemen, ladies and myself, desire to spend a few weeks in the far West during the warm season, and I hope it will be our fortune to secure your excellent services as our guide. I have heard much concerning your wonderful exploits in the West, and of such a character, too, as commend you highly for efficiency in the scouting service of the government. If it be possible for you to accompany our party as guide some time during the following month, please write me at once at Willard's Hotel, Washington, indicating what compensation you will expect, and also from what point in Kansas we had best start on the tour. I

shall leave to you the selection of a pleasant route, as your general acquaintance with the places of interest between the Missouri river and Rocky Mountains better qualify you for deciding the trip that promises the most attractions.

Hoping to hear from you at your earliest convenience,  
I am, yours truly,

HENRY WILSON.

On receipt of this letter Wild Bill replied at some length, giving Mr. Wilson a brief description of many interesting places, a visit to which it would be profitable for the party to make. He fixed his compensation at five hundred dollars for the trip indicated in his descriptions, and feeling sure of an acceptance of the proposition, he made provision for returning west. In this connection it is but proper that reference should be made to another trip Bill had made as guide to a party of officials, during which, however, no incidents of special interest occurred:

In the spring of 1866 a party of government officials, appointed in compliance with a special act of Congress for the purpose, made a visit to all the Indian tribes then on government reservations. Wild Bill was chosen to guide this party, and acquitted himself so well that each member of the commission paid him the highest compliments. Henry M. Stanley, who has since distinguished himself by his African explorations, accompanied the commission as a special correspondent of the *New York Herald*, and in that capacity he epitomized the life of Wild Bill and sent many columns of matter to his paper descriptive of the great scout's valor, quiet humor, wonderful acumen as a guide and Indian trailer, and above all his marvellous accuracy of aim. These stories possessed much interest for readers of the *Herald*, and in fact for readers generally, as they were all copied by many other papers, and served to make the name of

Wild Bill as familiar as that of Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. *Harper's Magazine* devoted several pages to a description of his adventures, a number of which were appropriately illustrated. But it is only necessary to pay a passing allusion to these facts, as the important incidents are already given more fully in the preceding pages.

On the twentieth of June the Wilson party, with Bill as guide, left Hays City, well provided with teams, spring vehicles, and a well stocked commissary. The gentlemen in the party, with the exception of the Vice President, were dressed, singularly enough, in a style of garments peculiar to the Washington modes; that is, tight-fitting pants, cut-away coats and stiff hats. Bill could not help making some remarks about this, to him, odd manner of dress, especially as he saw how inconvenient, if not uncomfortable, it must prove upon a journey of the character they were about to make. Mrs. Wilson and the ladies had more wisely prepared themselves with easy, unconventional dresses, at once evidencing the fact that they appreciated the admiration of their escorts less than the comforts they desired while traveling on the plains. Mrs. Wilson being a woman of superior wit, and jolly under almost any circumstances; in fact the evanescent life of a party, on the day of their departure engaged Bill in an agreeable conversation, and the two speedily became well acquainted. "Now," said she to Bill, "you are with an unsophisticated crowd of Yaukees who know just as much about life on the plains as they do about the person who first discovered there was a man in the moon; there is no doubt, too, but that some of these younger ones are badly in love, and this only serves to make their simplicity more apparent. I want you, Mr. Hickok, to keep a protecting eye on the party,





Scenery on the Route Traveled by the Wilson Party.

discover their good and indifferent points if you can, determine which are most courageous, etc., and see that none of them get into trouble."

Of course Wild Bill readily assented to this request from so amiable and elegant a lady; and the party set out with bright prospects under his watchful guardianship, traveled over a large extent of territory, camping at night beside cool streams, roamed through the cañons of the Arkansas, and visited the spot on Republican river where the Cheyennes had perpetrated one of the most terrible massacres that is recorded in Indian warfare. Bill interested the party in many ways, giving them examples of his skillful marksmanship with pistol and rifle, pointing out places memorable for some exciting incident, and at night regaling them with stories of his life. The weather was delightful during the entire trip, game abundant and nothing occurred to mar the perfect pleasure of anyone in the social expedition.

Nearly five weeks had slipped by before the party returned to Hays City, but the time had been so pleasantly employed that there was a general regret expressed for the termination of the tour.

On the day the tourists were to leave for the East the Vice-President had a dinner prepared at the hotel, to which Bill was invited, and at the conclusion of the feast the distinguished head of the party addressed Bill in the most complimentary language, referring to his reputation and pronouncing him one of the characters most essential in the settlement of the great West, where brave men were needed to curb the ferocious elements met with in all new countries; then opening a beautiful case containing two elegant ivory-handled pistols, he presented it to Bill as a souvenir of "the most pleasant trip he (the Vice-President) had ever made."

Hays City was, at this time, one of the liveliest towns on the frontier. It contained a population of nearly ten thousand souls, and nearly every "soul" in it was a lively character. The people were essentially a sporting



The Principal Amusement at Hays City.

class, with a gambling den for every dozen of the males, and a saloon—well, the whole town was practically a drinking shop. Fights, murders and drunks were the incidents which enlivened the otherwise stupid place—

not much stupidity about such a place, the reader will at once decide. But in fact, outside of the demoralizing deviltry of the citizens, Hays City was only a little spot sitting uneasily in the centre of a quiet prairie. On Sunday, as well as on every other day, the voice of the keno caller could be heard in its monotonous cadence, as well also as the exclamation "O! shucks," from those whose numbers were all crossed—but one. Faro had its votaries even more numerous than keno, and the street walker could any time hear the euphonious refrain, "I'll copper on the tray," or, "busted ag'in, gimme a drink."

It was a singular civilization, that of Hays City in the fall of 1869, and as every one enjoyed the sensation of hourly expecting a call from an enemy bent on fight, the population consented to have a marshal, whose services they expected would be that of a mutual protector, guarding one enemy from the surprises of another.

Wild Bill being universally regarded as the very personification of reckless courage, and therefore being accordingly popular, was elected City Marshal of Hays City on the 8th of September, 1869. He went into office at once, and while every disorderly character considered himself exempt from interference, he nevertheless expected the marshal to interfere with every other person, so that there was great satisfaction felt, and really salutary influences were looked forward to, in the newly created office.

## CHAPTER IX.

DIRECTLY after assuming his official duties Bill was called to perform an act which involved the destruction of one of the most noted desperadoes on the border,—Jack Strawhan,—who had started a half-dozen fresh graveyards in as many different places, and boasted of his ability to clean out Hays City and its new marshal.

Some years before the occurrence about to be related took place, Capt. Kingsbury, at that time sheriff of Ellsworth county, had occasion to arrest Strawhan for violent conduct and outrages committed in the town of Ellsworth. But the desperado was too powerful for one man to handle; besides his herculean strength he was well armed and quick to use his weapons. Knowing this Capt. Kingsbury called his deputy, named Charles Whitney, and also Wild Bill, who chanced to be in Ellsworth at the time, to his assistance. The three approached Strawhan in such a manner that he saw resistance would result in his certain death, and therefore quietly submitted to arrest. But as there was no jail in Ellsworth he was tied securely for a short while until manacles could be provided.

During the time of arrest Strawhan made oath by declaration that he would kill Wild Bill, Whitney and Kingsbury when the first opportunity offered, and the character of the man justified belief that his public threat would be carried into execution.

Learning that Bill was discharging the duties of City Marshal at Hays City, Strawhan paid a special visit to that place with the avowed purpose of getting even with him, a warning which soon reached the ears of his intended victim.

On the nineteenth of October, 1869, while Bill was in Tommy Drum's saloon with a party of friends, his alert eye caught the form of Strawhan entering the room by a side door. As his acquaintance with the desperado had never extended beyond the circumstantial meeting in Ellsworth, Bill appeared to take no notice of him, though in fact the quick glances of his watchful eyes kept him duly informed of every movement his enemy made. Strawhan strolled up toward the bar in an apparently indifferent manner until within ten feet of Bill, when, conceiving that his opportunity had arrived, he jerked out a heavy navy pistol, but when in the act of raising it, Bill, with lightning-like quickness, drew one of his small derringers, and with the same movement sent a slug squarely into Strawhan's left eye and through the brain. The shot was so instantly fatal that the man was stone dead on his feet, falling forward on his face without even a twitch of the muscles. Without giving the slightest heed to his desperate work Bill turned to the bar and extended the familiar invitation to all in the house: "Come up, boys, let's all take a drink," and it is only a fitting conclusion to this description of an "official execution" to say, that none in the saloon refused.

The body of Strawhan was "sat on" by a "crowd-er's jury," the verdict of which was, "served him right, and so we declare."

At night some of the boys got up an improvised string band and gave Bill a serenade in true Western style, which ended, as did everything else in Hays City at that time, in a general free-for-all drunk, with a few bad fights by way of spice for the occasion.

Whitney did not die by the hands of Strawhan, but in 1873 he became engaged in a brawl with a Texas desperado named Ben Thompson, in which he was shot to

death. Capt. Kingsbury is still living in Kansas City, respected by all who know him.

In December following the event just narrated, Hays City became the objective point of Bill Mulvey, a notorious thug, prize fighter, cut-throat and demoralized character generally, whose home was in St. Joseph, Mo. Mulvey was a "terror" in his own neighborhood and had fallen into the pernicious custom of running St. Joe whenever his skin became thoroughly impregnated with whisky, which was, generally, on an average of seven times a week. When Mulvey reached Hays City he wanted only a few drinks of that tantalizing, heroizing, belligerent liquid peculiar to the far West, to put him in proper condition for carrying out his old custom in the new town, and he was not long in supplying the want.

It may be proper to explain here that, while every person in Hays was a "bad crowd" on general principles, yet there was no single individual in the place who had ever assumed the responsibility of running the town, or believed he was equal to such an undertaking. But Bill Mulvey was an importation, and therefore excusable for arrogating to himself a capacity which no man indigenous to the place thought of claiming.

When Mulvey got up a pressure of about three hundred pounds to the square inch he moved in his old style, and began howling like a Dervish, swearing like a recent senator from Missouri, and making the town shake with resolutions to clean out every "son of a whale" who showed himself on the streets. Not satisfied with threatening, he secured a club and began a promiscuous onslaught on windows, boxes, doors and everything he could find that was breakable. At length a constable and justice of the peace trained their official batteries on him and tried to place him under arrest, but with such poor

success that their prisoner brought up his reserve and with raised club ran the two dignitaries nearly a mile out of town.

Things were now getting altogether too interesting for comfort, for Mulvey, emboldened by his successful raid on the two officers, took possession of the town so completely that wherever he went there seemed to be, judging from the ready obedience everyone yielded him, a perfect resignation to his authority. At the time these depredations were being committed Wild Bill was in another part of the town and did not learn of Mulvey's disturbances until the west end was given over to his pleasure. Word was brought to Bill, by a little boy, concerning the troubles of citizens dealing with the desperado, and going at once to the place of difficulty he soon found Mulvey, who had a pistol in each hand and was still yelling like a tribe of victorious Comanches. Approaching him in a quiet manner Wild Bill said:

"Stranger, I shall have to arrest you for disorderly conduct; come with me."

Raising his two pistols in Bill's face Mulvey replied:

"Well, now stranger, suppose you come with me, I hold the winning hand."

"That's so," responded Bill, "I can't beat that pair."

"No, I guess you can't, and since you are so fresh it will be a good thing for me to hang you up till you dry. March!" was the command given by Mulvey.

Before Bill turned he backed off two or three steps and raising his hand as if to warn Mulvey against an attack about to be made on him from the rear, said:

"Don't hit him boys, he's only in fun."

The strategy was perfectly successful, for Mulvey immediately turned about expecting to confront a new ad-



versary, but this act was the last in his career, for Wild Bill secured the drop in an instant and shot Mulvey in the head, killing him with that rare skill for which he was remarkable.

Everyone in Hays rejoiced at the result of Bill Mulvey's "big tear," and instead of holding an inquest over the dead body it was at once carted out to the nearest burying spot and slung into a hole. Wild Bill was congratulated with words full of unctious flattery and the citizens directly wanted to see him elevated to the highest pinnacle of fame, for they observed that he was civilizing and protecting the neighborhood.

The duties of marshal were easy enough for several months after the killing of Strawhan and Mulvey. Bill was regarded with great popularity as a conservator of the peace, without specially interfering with the *morale* of the town; his acts met with great favor because they were recognized as the execution of a stern but wholesome justice.

During the campaigns of 1869-70 Gen. Phil. Sheridan had his headquarters at Ft. Hays, a station one mile west of Hays City. After the success of the Indian expeditions along the Wachita, Arickaree Fork and Canadian rivers, the troops returned to Ft. Hays, making a garrison for the time being of about two thousand soldiers. These enlisted men paid frequent visits to the town, and soon became the source of no small annoyance, as they were in the habit of filling up on pioneer whisky and then turning things literally inside out. Wild Bill had arrested several of the more turbulent soldiers from time to time, which developed a bitter hatred on the part of the men against him. He anticipated trouble from these unreasonable, reckless volunteers, and was constantly prepared for emergencies.

On the 12th of February, 1870, a body of soldiers visited Hays and began their usual orgies, which, of course, called for Wild Bill's interference. Among the disturbers of the peace was a large, double-jointed sergeant from the Seventh U. S. Cavalry, who had a goodly reputation as a boss shoulder-striker, and his ability to "curry" the best man in the regiment was generally conceded. This fellow (whose name is not given in Bill's diary for the reason, perhaps, that he never learned it), on the day named, was in Paddy Welch's saloon smashing up things with an abandon which did him infinite credit as a desperate character. Wild Bill learned of the disturbance and was soon at his post of duty. Soldiers were standing around watching the hilarious occupation of their sergeant and evidently enjoying the privilege of practicing any deviltry their fancy dictated. Bill walked into the saloon and laid his hand on the sergeant, at the same time repeating his invariable command: "Stranger, I shall have to arrest you for disorderly conduct; come with me."

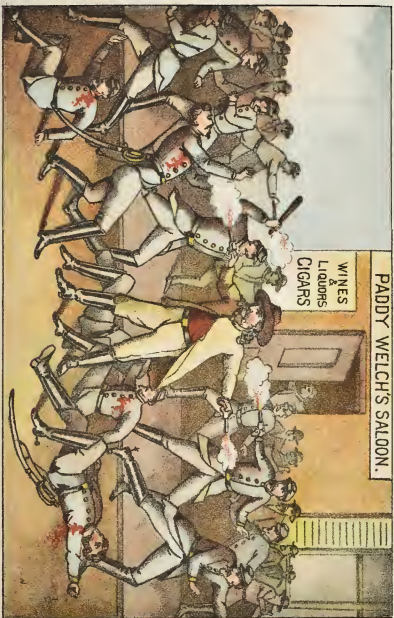
The sergeant, taken by surprise at what he conceived to be a piece of remarkable cheek and impudence, responded:

"How much do you weigh, Mr. Long Hair?"

"I weigh only one hundred and sixty-five pounds," replied Bill, "when I'm in a good humor, but my fighting size is a fraction more than a ton; you come along with me."

"Hold on!" said the sergeant, "I'm not going with you just now; but I'll tell you what I will do: I'll fight you a fair fight right here in front of this saloon, and if you lick me then I'm your meat, but if I lick you then you're my meat; how do you like the proposition, eh?"

Before Bill could reply more than a dozen soldiers sur-



WILD BILLS FIGHT WITH FIFTEEN SOLDIERS.



rounded the two men and began shouting: "Fight, fight, let 'em fight," etc., so that but one of two alternatives was left, either get out of the crowd like a coward, or fight like the brave man he was. It was therefore agreed that Bill and the sergeant should leave their weapons with Paddy Welch and engage in a fair battle to determine squarely their respective claims to the other's "meat."

Although the sergeant was much larger, he was by no means a match for Bill. When the two men faced each other, stripped of their coats, they showed abundant mettle and lost no time in getting to work. The sergeant led off, but made such a bad miscue that his right eye lit heavily against Bill's fist and his nose followed suit countering against the kick of the marshal's second blow. Bill fought all round him, and in less than half a minute had the big sergeant down in a dreadfully demoralized condition. Fourteen of the soldiers seeing their officer in the grip of a threshing machine with small chance of getting out without much assistance, ran in and began to club and stone Bill. Paddy Welch, realizing the great danger of his friend, at the imminent risk of his own life gathered up Bill's pistols and, pushing through the crowd, succeeded in placing them in their owner's hands. Now the fun did begin with renewed interest. Bang! and with the discharge down went one of the boldest soldiers. Then the crowd shouted, "Look out! he's got a pistol!" but before they got away, two more of their number were shot dead. The remaining soldiers then drew their pistols and began firing with such accuracy that Bill was struck no less than seven times. He retreated firing, wounding three more of his antagonists, which permitted him to escape by swimming Smoky river. When he reached the other side, how-

ever, his wounds gave him so much pain that, fairly dragging his injured body to a buffalo wallow, he secreted himself therein and tore up his clothes to bandage his hurts. Three balls had passed through his arms, three more entered the fleshy parts of his legs, and one had penetrated the flesh of his left side. None of these wounds were serious provided they could have received proper attention, but he was now compelled to undergo an exposure which not one man in a thousand, perhaps, could survive. While on his feet the blood had run down into his boots until they were nearly full; he was, therefore, compelled to cut them off, especially as one of the wounds was in the calf of his leg which the boot top rubbed, producing the most violent pain. Bill lay in the wallow for two days, so stiffened and in such agony from his injuries that he could not summon up courage to attempt a change. The weather was very cold in the meantime, and from this he suffered as much as from the wounds; his clothes—the few that remained on him—were frozen to the ground, and the bandages, now stiff from frozen blood, seemed to gnaw at his injuries like ingenious instruments of torture.

On the third day, half-frozen, weak from loss of blood and fasting, sore in every muscle, and suffering from the most poignant anguish, Wild Bill arose, with the crotcheting motion of Rip Van Winkle from twenty years of sleeping, and by dint of incomparable resolution gained his feet. But being unable to put on his boots he wrapped his undershirt about his feet and struggled away from that bed of terrible suffering. Moving at a painfully slow pace he nevertheless managed to reach Ben Williams' ranche, five miles from Hays, and there he remained under the care of a kind friend for several days.

Knocking at the cabin door where Williams lived, his friend answered the summons, but, with a startled look, said: "Why, my God! Bill, what is the matter? Come in and tell me what I can do for you."

"Well, Ben," slowly responded Bill, "I am in a bad fix; shot all to pieces and suffering worse than I did with them hurts I got up at Rock Creek. Didn't you hear of the fight up at Hays, three days ago?"

"Yes," replied Williams, "I heard about the fight, but I never knew you got shot; I am afraid, Bill, they will catch you here, for they are scouring the country for you."

"Why, who is after me now?" eagerly enquired Bill.

"Good gracious! old pard," replied Williams, "don't you know that Gen. Sheridan has ordered out a whole company with instructions to bring you in dead or alive?"

"No," answered Bill, "is that so? Well, they can take me here, then, for I can't go any further; I'm almost dead from pain and hunger."

"They'll not take you if I can prevent it; I've got an old pallet up in the loft of this cabin, and I guess they'll hardly find you up there," were the assuring words of Williams.

Bill was at once assisted up a ladder that stood in a corner of the cabin, and he there lay secreted and was properly cared for by his friend for more than three weeks.

It transpired that Bill had effected his escape from the soldiers without any of them supposing he was wounded, and after Gen. Sheridan had issued his stern order to capture and bring in the daring marshal "dead or alive," it was reasonably supposed that only a long chase would accomplish that result; consequently the soldiers who were sent after Bill did not look for him in the immedi-

ate vicinity, and were therefore unable to execute the order.

After nearly a month of hiding, under the care of Williams, Bill had so far recovered that he left the ranche in the company of his friend Whitney and went to Ellsworth. But through fear of detection at this point, he left there in a box car on the Kansas Pacific road and went to Junction City, where he remained until his wounds had entirely healed.

---

## CHAPTER X.

THE vicinity of Hays City being decidedly insalubrious, Wild Bill, after casting about some time for a congenial and remunerative occupation, at length decided upon a novel speculation, in the firm belief that he saw a fortune awaiting him in such an engagement. He rightly divined that Niagara Falls was a place of popular resort for fashionable people and that these visitors, having plenty of money, were willing to pay liberally for their amusement. Now, thought he, what could afford so much interest as a buffalo chase—real, shaggy, untamed buffaloes, with Comanche Indians to lead the sport? The idea did appear pregnant with large profit, and but for some mismanagement would, no doubt, have paid very handsomely.

Having made up his mind, Bill at once determined to secure six fine buffalos and four Comanche Indians, and with this outfit he proposed to visit Niagara during the summer. Accordingly, in May, he set out for the buffalo feeding grounds on the Republican river, intent upon the capture of animals for the forthcoming exhibition.



Reaching Culbertson, a small village in Nebraska, now the county seat of Hitchcock county, Bill employed three assistants and with them went southwest one hundred miles. Here he found a large herd of buffaloes grazing on the prairie a few miles north of Beaver Creek and made ready for the capture.

A very laughable circumstance was connected with the exploit about to be related. Bill had killed scores of buffaloes, understood their habits and was an expert hunter, but he had never undertaken to capture one of these huge, unwieldy animals alive. After duly considering the matter, he adopted the most ludicrous scheme that ever entered a man's mind. He knew that a drove of horses could be easily managed by tying their heads together, and this knowledge prompted him to use the same means for controlling the desired number of buffaloes.

In pursuance of his resolution, he prepared a number of lassoes and, having everything ready, started on a fleet horse for the drove. By riding and driving judiciously, he soon got into the center of the herd, which numbered about five hundred, but with all his perseverance he could not satisfactorily adjust his lassoes, on account of the low position in which a running buffalo carries his head. Seeing that little could be accomplished while on horseback, he decided to abandon his horse and ride the buffaloes, which were pressed so closely together that he could easily slide from one to the other. Acting upon this determination, he removed the bridle from his horse, so that the reins might not fall and become entangled in the feet of the horse or the buffaloes, and with his gun in one hand and lassos in the other, he jumped upon the nearest buffalo. But now finding his gun an encumbrance, he rode the buffalo while tying the gun on his

back, and then began the adjustment of his lassoes. Bill presented a most comical appearance astride of a lumbering bull, which plunged and snorted with fright as though Satan himself were breaking him in. But the work of maintaining a proper position, while managing his gun and lassoes, was a truly perplexing and difficult task to Bill, which only one accomplished in expert horsemanship could possibly perform. The assistants kept pace behind, laughing at the rare sport now developing, and feeling pretty certain that the fun must continue for some time, as Bill had worked into the herd until they could see no means for escape out of the rushing avalanche, unless he could shoot an open furrow through the stampeded buffaloes. But he had only one gun and his pair of pistols, so this idea was impracticable, and with this reflection Bill's assistants grew suddenly grave over the possibility of his destruction. They therefore rode around the herd, shouting and shooting, with the hope of separating them, but Bill objected to this; shouting through the dust and roar of the affrighted animals, "Keep back; let 'em run, and I'll lariat the whole drove."

After riding a buffalo thus furiously for several miles, and having become far removed from his horse, that was running with the herd, Bill concluded, since it was quite impossible to throw the lasso successfully, that he would place his lariats around the horns of at least six large buffaloes running abreast, and take his chances for getting out from his uncomfortably close position, and securing his prize afterward.

It was a comparatively easy matter for him to thus secure the required number of animals, though the security extended no further than binding their heads together. But he reasoned rightly that the six thus tied, being unable to freely move their heads, would soon tire and

become separated from the herd, a supposition which was soon verified. Then his assistants came up, seeing him ride one of the selected buffaloes, and throwing a long lasso the animals were soon in the grip of their captors. Bill's horse was easily recovered, for the moment the herd separated he returned to the horses ridden by Bill's assistants.

It was a long way back to a settlement, however, and a much greater distance to a railroad station. How to drive the buffaloes was then the conundrum. It was finally determined that two men should ride on each side of the herd with lassoes attached so as to pull the buffaloes in any required direction. But the brutes proved unruly as a contrary pig, and ran from one side to the other, backward and forward, until the horses and men were tired out. To obtain a necessary rest, the buffaloes were tied to a tree and kept there for nearly two hours, until the horses had been fed, watered and well rested. During this breathing spell the idea occurred to one of the assistants that the buffaloes would drive much better if they were hobbled. "Well," said Bill, when the suggestion was made, "it is singular I hadn't thought of that before; suppose you prepare some hobbles and put them on."

But he was not so much surprised at the suggestion as he sought to make his assistants believe, for it was the hope that some of his men would try the experiment that prompted him to reply in the manner he did.

One of the men was a herder and understood hobbling a steer or mule, but it is, nevertheless, certain that he did not know anything about hobbling buffaloes—until after his first experience. Having everything prepared he approached one of the animals which, though its head was fast, had the free use of its hind quarters. Just as

the cow-boy was in the act of slipping the noose around the buffalo's fore-leg the brute whirled its quarters and planted its hind foot on the shoulder of the astonished hobbler. Did you ever see a professional tumbler turn backward handsprings around a circus ring, observing how rapidly he revolved? That cow-boy resembled an expert tumbler for all the world. He just literally got up and spun through the air, as though he had been reeled off a spinning-wheel by a country maid. And when he lit there stood the buffalo about fifteen feet away looking as demure and melancholy as though he had lost his hind leg more than a week before. These men never laughed more heartily nor did one ever feel so grievously humbled as was that quartette of buffalo catchers. The animals were not hobbled.

After two weeks of the most tedious work the six buffaloes were brought to Ogallala, and from thence over the Union Pacific to Omaha, where they were kept until Bill could conclude arrangements with the necessary number of Comanche Indians, of southern Indian Territory. Four excellent specimens of that tribe were secured, one of whom had a cinnamon bear and another a large monkey; as these two animals were deemed curiosities which might be advantageously used in the Niagara entertainment, they were also engaged, and the menagerie moved from Omaha for Niagara Falls on the twenty-second of June.

After reaching his destination Wild Bill set about concluding arrangements for the entertainment. A large lot of ground was secured on the American shore and a suitable enclosure erected. During the time these preparations were being made the Indians exhibited their bear and monkey, deriving considerable profit therefrom.

The chase being duly advertised for the 20th of July,

an immense crowd of people assembled to witness the novel sight. As the enclosure was necessarily very large, Bill did not deem it advisable to build a high board fence to obstruct an outside view, thinking that the people who were interested in the exhibition would contribute quite as liberally if he passed his hat around among them.



The Aboriginal Part of the Outfit.

The buffaloes were brought out in cages and at the appointed time were turned loose, with the Indians, who were decked in war paint, leather breeches and eagle feathers, in full pursuit, mounted on ponies. Several gentlemen, visitors at the Falls, having provided them-

selves with horses, also entered the chase, and a hundred yelping pet curs and poodles lent their assistance to make the occasion excitingly interesting. The Indians, yelling as only Comanches can, chased the affrighted buffaloes round and round the enclosure, showing at the same time their superb horsemanship, by executing the most difficult feats, to the great delight of the crowd. During the chase Bill moved among the spectators with his big sombrero extended, giving every one a chance to contribute. But after filing and pushing through the assemblage of nearly five thousand people, he emerged with the proceeds of his expensive exhibition, and found that the entire contribution amounted to just \$123.86; the expenses at the same time were \$1,279.30, leaving a balance sheet showing a loss of more than \$1,000.

When the Indians had returned again with the recaptured buffaloes, Bill was confronted with a bill of expenses—novel but importunate. During the excitement the bear had been left muzzled and tied to a stake, and the monkey in his cage. Of course these curiosities had their votaries, and some one, in a spirit of mischief, had removed the muzzle and unloosed the bear, hoping to get up a counter attraction in the meantime. The mischievous fellow, whoever he was, did not suffer a disappointment. There was a heavy bearded Italian in the crowd selling Vienna sausages, and another dressed in sailor's garb stood on a box singing songs, for which he expected a small consideration. When the peddler came up near the bear the smell of fresh sausage was too much for the hungry animal to forego investigating, and being loose, he turned quickly on the Italian with the intention of capturing the savory meats. The poor fellow, frightened to the limit of his senses, let go his platter and tried to run, but the bear grabbed him in its large paws and tore

his checked overshirt into shreds, though giving his body only a few scratches. Some of the bystanders rushed to the rescue, and one bolder than the rest seized the bear



The Bear and the Sausage.

in his arms and held it fast until the sausage man recovered the full use of his heels. Having been raised from a small cub by its Indian owner, the bear developed no

dangerous qualities and was tied again without difficulty.

When Bill came in he was told of the side-show which had opened doors during the chase, and the trembling Italian greeted him with a demand for damages. After some parleying Bill purchased a new shirt for the irate but still badly scared fellow and then exhausted his detective ability in an effort to discover who unloosed the bear—but he failed signally.

The pecuniary failure of the buffalo chase now brought with it many troubles for Bill. He had not only spent every cent he could raise inaugurating the enterprise, but still owed sundry bills for hotel accommodations, care for his animals and entertainment for the Indians. He was hopelessly "busted," and just there, as if to add insult to his other mortifications, a dapper Englishman, wearing a single eye-glass, sauntered up to him and superciliously accosted him with:

"See 'ere, my friend, h'are you h'an Indian h'or a white man?"

In a perfect frenzy Bill struck the impudent foreigner a blow in the glass eye that sent him plowing up the ground ten feet away, following the blow with the remark:

"That's the kind of a man I am; do you want to extend the acquaintance any further?"

It is only proper to state, in order to satisfy the curiosity of the reader, that the Englishman manifested no disposition to become better acquainted, as the intimacy had already been disagreeably close.

Being unable to satisfy any of the demands made against him, Bill was left no other recourse than that of transferring the ownership of his buffaloes. The Indians were compelled to part company with their bear and monkey. With the balance left them, after paying all



bills, they were enabled to accompany Bill back to Kansas, and return to their reservation. The pleasure of the trip, which had enabled them to see so much of the white man's civilization, seemed to fully satisfy them for their services, for they made no demand on their employer for compensation.

When Wild Bill reached Kansas he found, to his delight, that Gen. Sheridan and the Seventh U. S. Cavalry had left Hays City, and he was, therefore, relieved of any apprehensions regarding his personal safety in that section of country. It was his intention, after learning this fact, to resume his duties at Hays, provided he could again secure the office of marshal; but, stopping at Abilene a few days to see some friends, he was surprised by an offer to make him marshal of that place. As the salary was entirely satisfactory Bill concluded to accept the position, especially since adverse circumstances had entirely exhausted his exchequer and immediate occupation was therefore essentially necessary.

When Bill became the custodian of the peace at Hays City he found a town just about as full of iniquity as he thought it possible to discover on the continent; but while Hays was only comfortably full of the Devil's emissaries, Abilene was running over and bursting out at the side with the very double distilled essence of depravity. The town, with less than one thousand permanent residents, was filled with so much vileness that the very atmosphere appeared impregnated with the odor of abomination; murder ran riot, drunkenness was the rule, gambling a universal pastime, fighting a recreation, and the mischief to pay generally the engrossing occupation.

There was one chief reason why Abilene reveled in greater wickedness than any other Kansas town, and her citizens are in a measure excusable because they were

helpless. The place was one of much importance, owing to the fact that it had become the central shipping point for the cattle raised in Texas, New Mexico and Indian Territory. Every day great herds of cattle were driven in, and accompanying the herds were scores of reckless cow-boys and owners, who regarded nothing with so much



A Street in Abilene.

favor as the meanest brands of fighting whisky. After filling the pens these men invariably traveled to some saloon, on as straight a line as the honey-laden bee, and like a dry fish thrown back into its element, they absorbed vitriol-adulterated liquids until some desperate act was

almost certain to conclude the spree. The large cattle transactions at the pens made money abundant at Abilene, and as money is the root of all evil, every one in the place managed to secure a large portion of the root. Gambling followed as a consequence, and, preserving the natural sequence, shooting and stabbing became of daily occurrence.

This was the condition of society in Abilene when Wild Bill received his commission and began to carry a club as the insignia of his office. Of course there was much in his favor, for, though rhapsodizing sentimentalists may enquire, "What's in a name?" it was very apparent that in the name of Wild Bill many bullies intuitively saw a grim harbinger of their fate if their carnival of crime remained unchecked.

Among the most desperate men on the border, who had killed several men and "stampeded" nearly all the Western towns, was a small, black-eyed, professional gambler, named Phil Cole. He had no regular abiding place, but striking Abilene he found that town so well suited to his calling and disposition that, to use a Western phrase, "he got his washing done in that hole" for several months.

Within two days after Bill's appointment as marshal, Phil Cole, in company with another desperado named Jack Harvey, got on one of his accustomed tears, and regardless of the new officer, he began his usual indiscriminate destruction of property, smashing windows, kicking in doors, insulting women, firing his pistol, and sundry other malicious acts which demanded Bill's interference. Jack Harvey was a companion of Cole in all these villainous proceedings and the two were permitted the free exercise of their devilish proclivities until Bill, in company with his deputy, Jim McWilliams, put in an

objection. McWilliams, was well acquainted with Cole and knew that some one would get badly hurt unless the gambler could be pacified. Approaching him in a friendly spirit he tried to induce Cole to give up his pistols, but in doing this Bill, standing off a few feet, ordered the gambler to surrender. This order only served to precipitate the conflict, for Cole immediately



Wild Bill Accidentally Kills a Friend.

fired at Bill, but as McWilliams had hold of his arm the shot proved ineffectual. Bill now drew his own pistol and fired at Cole, but at the same instant the gambler in wrestling with McWilliams threw him in front in such manner that the faithful deputy received the bullet in his heart and fell over dead. Cole now again raised his pistol, but ere he pulled the trigger a shot from Bill's

weapon penetrated the gambler's brain, marking him for the second victim. Up to this time Jack Harvey had remained a mute spectator of the tragic proceedings, but seeing his partner in the agonies of death he pulled his pistol and fired at Bill, the ball passing through his hat and cutting off a lock of hair. But this proved Harvey's last shot; he had falsely reckoned, and for it paid the usual penalty. The smoke had hardly swept out of the muzzle of his weapon when the deadly aim of Wild Bill accomplished its work. Poor Jack, a good fellow under ordinary circumstances, forfeited his right to Bill's clemency and when he went down there was a bullet-hole through his heart.

No act of Bill's whole life ever caused him such anguish of mind, such poignant grief, as the accidental killing of McWilliams. The two had been old friends—bosom friends in fact—and that his death should come in such a manner was abundant reason for the inexpressible sorrow Bill felt. Years afterward tears would start instantly in Bill's eyes at the mention or remembrance of his friend's death.

The killing of Cole was regarded by the community as a "Christian act," because it was like ridding the country of a ferocious and destructive beast; but to make the act yet more righteous Bill raised the necessary money with which to give his victims decent burial.

On one occasion, during a visit of Wild Bill to Hays City, after assuming the conservatorship of Abilene's peace, he met with an adventure which has in it all the elements of an anecdote. At the time referred to it chanced that a professional pugilist named Patterson, from New York, had become a Hays City transient and had organized a school for training the combatively disposed people of that town in the art of pugilism. He

had several ambitious scholars who made such progress that the Professor decided to give an entertainment in the place and thus demonstrate the results of his instructions. Among those in attendance—and the whole population was present—to witness the miniature arenic bouts on the improvised stage was Wild Bill, drawn thither by a natural curiosity.

The novel entertainment proved a grand success; so much in fact that several new scholars were enrolled for the succeeding term. After the exhibition had concluded, the Professor took a stroll down town—which means that he paid a visit to the most popular saloon for a “night cap” before retiring. In the saloon he found the usual crowd, and of course a conversation was at once started on pugilism and the qualifications of noted Western characters. Wild Bill was mentioned as being the handiest man out West, a good shooter, skillful fighter, and brave to rashness. In reply to the panegyrics offered by the crowd on Bill, the Professor said:

“Now, look here, I’ve heard a great deal about this man Wild Bill; I would like very much to meet him, and if he’s got the pluck to stand before me I’ll show you how little he knows about the manly art.”

One of the party responded: “If you would like to see him, just look over toward that corner (pointing to Bill); that man wearing a sombrero and drinking with Buffalo Bill is the person you want.”

“Good enough,” answered the Professor, and stepping to Bill he touched our hero on the shoulder and addressed him:

“I understand that your name is Wild Bill, and that you carry around in your clothes the reputation of being the boss fighter in the West.”

“Where did you get your information?” responded Bill.

“Why, all the boys declare you have got away with every one that has tackled you yet. But I want to say that while I am in this country I am boss; that’s my business, and I’m ready to demonstrate my claims.”

“Well,” said Bill (drawing two pistols), “I’ll just shoot a hole through each of your ears, so that we’ll all know you hereafter; the boss ought to carry his private mark.”

“Hold on, hold on,” said the Professor, “I don’t mean that I’m a pistol fighter; I’ll grant you the deserved reputation as the best pistol shot on the plains; but I can prove my claim as the best man on the muscle, and if you doubt my ability drop your pistols and shie your castor.”

The bantering tone of the Professor made Bill mad as a wounded catamount, and giving his weapons to Buffalo Bill he sailed into the pugilist like a red-hot ball from a columbiad. For several minutes the furniture in the room flew about, mixing with legs and arms, while the boys stood around deeply interested in the fight. Tim Finnegan’s wake was like a candy-pulling compared with the music of this memorable battle, for it developed into a veritable cyclone of furious laughter.

Is it necessary to tell the reader that Wild Bill was victorious? Of course not, for if he had been as badly whipped as the Professor was no mention would have been made of this encounter. The fact is, the Professor was so outrageously threshed—like the game cock of many victories, who, after one bad defeat, never plumes his feathers with the oil of courage again—that it spoiled all the reputation on which he had so successfully traveled; the proper thing he realized was to indefinitely postpone the ensuing school session and search for new fields, which, let us hope, he found more fruitful for his purposes.

## CHAPTER XI.

THERE was comparative peace in Abilene, after the Cole triple tragedy, until the holidays, when another fight occurred in which there were several seriously damaged skulls, but no deaths. On the 26th of December, 1870, a dozen Texan cattle men concluded to take the municipality by storm, as it were, and their preparatory arrangements, as a matter of course, consisted of an ample filling up with Abilene whisky. Among this number of "thoroughbreds," as they styled themselves, was the owner of one of the largest ranches in the Lone Star State. His name is withheld for obvious reasons, as he is still living, and a publication of the incidents about to be recorded, together with his real name and the impious part he subsequently played, would, certainly, be followed by legal perplexities. These interferences would not be regarded but for the fact that the necessary witnesses would be hard to find if indeed they could be at all. But the facts will not be departed from one jot or tittle, and in order to preserve the identity of this individual, he will be called "Assassin Bledsoe."

This bloody-minded twelve began their carousals by breaking into a harness shop, brutally beating the proprietor and stealing a number of bull-whips. With these they sallied out and attacked everyone they could meet on the street, cutting right and left, administering the severest punishment on several individuals and defying the authority of the entire town. None of them displaying any weapons, this fact led Wild Bill to believe that the unruly crowd might be controlled without bloodshed. He therefore called a few citizens to his assistance and undertook the difficult job of arresting the drunken party.



By chance Bill first accosted Assassin Bledsoe in his usual manner, using mild but pointed language. Instead of obeying the injunction, "Come with me," Bledsoe curled the bull-whip he carried over his head and striking Bill on the arm, it cracked with a pistol-like report. The whip-stroke cut almost like a knife, and the pain it produced was just enough to make Bill feel like killing some one, especially Bledsoe. Raising his club he dashed at the Texan and delivered a blow that laid open the skin on Bledsoe's head for a length of three inches. This precipitated a general fight in which the citizens who were deputized and the Texan crowd mixed indiscriminately. Clubs and stones were the only weapons used, but in the hands of infuriated men these were very dangerous and the result was something terrible enough for the most morbid appetite. Blood was streaming from numerous heads, arms were broken, bodies frightfully bruised and demoralization was pictured on every participant. Bill was the central figure in the fight, for being regarded as a kind of standard bearer the Texans were anxious to take his colors. But he displayed the cool intrepidity which had made his name so celebrated, and though struck hard with stones, he kept his feet and wielded a club like Hercules before the Hydra. The deputies being reinforced by a number of other citizens, at length closed the battle with acknowledged victory. The wounded were carried to the nearest houses and necessary surgical attention given them. The most serious injury was that received by Assassin Bledsoe, who was compelled to keep his bed for nearly two weeks, and the greatest care was required to prevent inflammation of the brain, from which he would have certainly died.

During this period of dangerous illness, Bledsoe declared to his attendants, under oath, with uplifted hand in

attestation of his determination, that if life were spared him he would have Wild Bill's heart. When this threat of vengeance was conveyed to Bill he gave it no special concern, as perhaps a hundred others had vowed to satisfy the same revenge; it was only another admonition for him to be always on the alert and watchful against the strategies of his enemies.

After Assassin Bledsoe had fully recovered from his wound he returned directly to his home in Texas and conceived one of the most dastardly, cowardly and villainous purposes ever brought forth by a naturally infernal mind. Being well acquainted with all the miserable, sneaking characters of his neighborhood, some of whom were dependent upon him for employment; men whose desires and ambitions never rose above a full whisky bottle, and to whose plastic natures a trifling consideration was sufficient for killing any man from a covert by the highway. Knowing, as he did, eight such persons specially qualified for his designs, Bledsoe sent for them and contrived a meeting in an old barn which stood some distance from his house. These eight monsters of iniquity met their cowardly employer as per agreement, and that the design might lose none of its black hideousness the meeting took place under the cover of darkness. A jug of whisky played the part of a needful accessory, and when its influence became perceptible Bledsoe disclosed his purpose. With what words he addressed his coterie of criminals no one knows but themselves, but it is definitely known that Bledsoe acquainted these men with his desire to possess the heart of Wild Bill, and that he therefore offered them the sum of \$5,000 in gold if they would kill him and take out his heart as an evidence that the deed had been consummated. He first bound them by a terrible oath not to

divulge a word of the compact about to be made nor of anything connected with the meeting in the barn. The terms of this desperate contract were that, under no circumstances, was his name to be discovered to anyone as the employer of their services for this dark deed; that the sum of \$50 should be given to each man to pay expenses of the trip to Abilene, and that in addition to this money \$5,000 in gold was to be divided equally between them on the day that Wild Bill's heart should be delivered to Bledsoe, and that the place of meeting for the completion of the contract should be at the old barn.

To all these articles of the agreement the eight villains readily assented, and being at once provided with money for the trip, on the second day thereafter they started for Abilene. Reaching that town, instead of waylaying Bill, as Bledsoe expected, the impious crowd of hired assassins, never having had so much money at one time before during their existence, could not resist the temptation of so many saloons, and gave way at once to the cravings of their unnatural appetites; as a consequence they drank until every one became hilariously drunk. While in this condition one of the men disclosed (though in disjointed sentences) the object of their visit to Abilene. A friend of Bill's hearing the asseverations of the drunken assassin plied him with such questions as brought out the entire scheme for the murder; and being satisfied that the plan had been truthfully revealed, though by an irresponsibly drunken fellow, he lost no time in acquainting Bill with the purposes of the eight men.

Bill received the information with thanks, but exhibited no uneasiness. He instructed his friend to return to the crowd and by some means which would not excite suspicion, inform them that he (Wild Bill) was going down to Topeka on the nine o'clock express. This information

the friend duly imparted to the Texans, at the same time dropping several hints that his pistols had become useless and he was going to Topeka for the purpose of purchasing a new pair.

This little piece of clever strategy worked with such great success that their discomfiture was complete. Bill became a passenger on the east bound express train, and chuckled as he saw the hired murderers take the coach next the baggage car. Their idea was that Bill could be readily influenced to pass from one car to the other upon an invitation to join them in a game of cards, or a pretended acquaintance, and while on the platform it was arranged that he should be stabbed and thrown from the car. If this very choice scheme had not miscarried, the band of assassins could have left the train at the first station and walking back to their victim cut out his heart without there being a witness to their consummate villainy.

But the scheme did not work. About an hour after the train left Abilene, or shortly after ten o'clock at night, Bill concluded that now was the time for him to act, as most of the passengers would be asleep. Knowing about where his would-be murderers sat, Bill walked through the car, opened the door and drew his two ivory-handled pistols. Reaching the door of the car in which the eight sat, he peeped through a moment to discover their exact positions; he then threw open the door and walked quickly up the passage way. In another moment the assassins saw him, and as they also saw a large pistol in each hand, their impious hearts fluttered with the fear which immediately possessed them. Bill drew his weapons so as to cover the band, and then in a voice which indicated his resolution, he said:

“Now, you infernal scoundrels, get out of this car instantly or I'll make buzzard food of your carcasses. Get

out, and off this train or I'll kill you as I would a pack of cowardly wolves. If it wasn't for disturbing the passengers I'd kill you in the car, but I'm going to either make you jump off this train or I'll shoot you off."

While addressing them in this threatening manner, he drove the men before him, and as they believed he would shoot anyhow, the entire eight stampeded in their efforts to get out of the car, and when the platform was reached they leaped off into the cut through which the train was running at a speed of thirty miles an hour. In the fall one of the villains was killed and three others so seriously hurt that they had to be carried off by their comrades. This ended the efforts made by Assassin Bledsoe to secure Wild Bill's heart, notwithstanding his desperate oath; neither did he have the gratification of attending his enemy's funeral; in fact, after this, he lived for nearly six years in constant dread lest Bill should find and kill him.

On Bill's return from Topeka, after this novel adventure with eight cowardly villains, he stopped two days at Ellsworth for the purpose of visiting a somewhat noted beauty of that place, named Emma Williams, whose charms had made an impression on the softer portion of his heart.

Visiting this gay siren of fatal beauty at the same time was a big bully named Bill Thompson, and thus the two Bills met under circumstances especially favorable for the excitement of a fresh killing. Added to this jealous rivalry, Thompson was moved by a spirit of revenge for having suffered arrest at the hands of Wild Bill nearly a year previously. Miss Williams, finding two dangerous lovers at her shrine, and both equally importunate for her favors, was compelled to choose between them. Fortunately for Bill, his handsome face and physique secured

the coveted favor, while the coarse, uncouth, brutal physiognomy of Thompson was relegated to the realms of woman's rejection. This decision could but culminate in a tragedy, for, as is usual with men of the base characteristics which distinguished Thompson, they almost invariably resort to foul means when fair efforts are unavailing to accomplish their object.

At the dinner hour, on the 17th day of February, 1871, Wild Bill entered a restaurant in Ellsworth and called for an oyster stew ; the tables of the restaurant were situated between small partitions, as are still frequently noticed in country ice-cream saloons in the West. He thoughtlessly took a seat with his back to the door, a position, it is but proper to say, he never afterward assumed. As the waiter returned, bearing the stew in a bowl on a platter, Bill saw him exhibit a sudden fright, and turning quickly in his seat discovered Thompson approaching and almost in the very act of firing on him. Sliding out of his chair with the celerity of a flash, the movement was executed with such rare fortune that the ball from Thompson's pistol struck the dinner plate on the table before Bill, shattering it into a hundred pieces. But ere the jealous desperado could fire again Bill had jerked a small deringer from his breeches pocket and sent a slug squarely into Thompson's forehead. His plot to kill Bill had only turned upon himself.

The waiter's fright at this sudden and tragic meeting of the rivals was so great that soup, bowl and platter fell from his nerveless grasp, rattling in fragments on the floor, adding, by the noise, much to the general confusion which ensued. Bill coolly resumed his position at the table and ordered the trembling waiter to bring him the stew, giving no heed to the unconscious victim on the floor ; but the waiter showed no such indifference, stand-

ing in dumb astonishment and fright until the restaurant filled with the curious of the village. Being unable to obtain the desired stew, Bill coolly arose, filed through the morbid crowd and hunted up another restaurant, where he feasted according to his pleasure. His arrest followed soon after, but at the preliminary hearing a clear case of "justifiable homicide" was established, so that his detention was not for more than two hours, and at night he returned to Abilene.

In June, 1871, Wild Bill was appointed U. S. Marshal at Hays City, or was rather reappointed, for he first served in that position a short time during 1869; but as nothing of special importance transpired worthy of record among his spirited adventures during that period, the fact was not mentioned in chronological sequence.

Two months after entering, for the second time, upon the discharge of his duty circumstances required his going to Wichita, Kansas, where he expected to arrest an offender who, it was reported, was infesting that town. There being no stage nor rail route to Wichita, Bill was compelled to make the trip on horseback, a style of traveling, however, well suited to his disposition and preference.

Upon arriving at Wichita, being wholly unacquainted in the place, he directed his course to a saloon, before the door of which he alighted and tied his horse. Entering the saloon, he was somewhat surprised to find it contained not a single soul—the proprietor, even, having absented himself from the business for the time being. However, desiring to rest himself and possibly obtain some essential information concerning the offender of whom he was in search, Bill sat down and commenced reading a newspaper in order to pass the time until the proprietor should return. While he was thus engaged his attention was attracted by a horseman who was just

dismounting preparatory to entering the saloon. Bill looked up from his paper as the stranger stepped upon the threshold, for he supposed the man to be some acquaintance of the neighborhood, and passed the usual salutation: "Howd'ye."

"How are you?" returned the stranger; "is your name Wild Bill?"

"That is what I'm generally called," replied Bill.

"Take that, then," said the stranger, accompanying the words with the instant production of a pistol which he fired so close in Bill's face that the skin was scorched. The bullet, by rare good fortune, only struck his scalp, cutting a furrow more than three inches in length and grazing the skull. It was a desperately close call, but another fortunate circumstance was in the fact that Bill was so badly stunned by the shot that he fell to the floor as if stricken dead. The stranger, thinking that he had secured his victim beyond a doubt, did not deem it necessary to fire another shot into his body, but feeling concerned for his own safety speedily mounted his horse and rode swiftly away to the south.

In a moment after the shot was fired the saloon proprietor returned, and seeing Bill lying on the floor in a dazed condition, quickly dashed a cup of water in his face; then attempted to examine the wound, which was bleeding profusely. But Bill soon rallied, and gaining consciousness he eagerly inquired for the stranger. Finding that his assailant had fled, he refused all offers of surgical attention, and with the blood streaming down his face, saturating his clothes and rendering his appearance gory in the extreme, he gave pursuit, first learning the direction taken by the would-be murderer. Being well mounted he gave rapid chase, though his horse was well spent by the trip just made. The stranger, after riding



with much speed for several miles, reined up, thinking pursuit would hardly be given soon by any officer, and least of all by the person who he felt sure was dead. But the pursuer pushed rapidly on, and soon came in sight of his man, who permitted him to approach within a few hundred yards before discovering that it was Wild Bill leading a chase. Notwithstanding his horse was nearly exhausted, he urged him to his best efforts, while the pursuit and flight developed into a furious ride, one for life, the other for vengeance. Finding that it was impossible to overtake the stranger, Bill had recourse to his weapons, and firing as he rode soon disabled the assassin's horse and directly afterward shot the man through the back, producing a slow and terribly painful death. To make his revenge more complete, Bill raised the head of his dying victim and with the long, keen bowie he carried cut from the stranger's scalp a strip of hair and flesh such as he considered would correspond with the portion extirpated from his own. With this ghastly trophy he returned to Wichita and there had his own wound properly attended to.

Subsequently Bill learned that his unknown assailant was a cousin of Phil Cole's—also a noted gambler,—who had made many threats to avenge his kinsman's death, and had sought for opportunities to execute his purpose, only to find at last that in seeking revenge he had become the victim of a more fatal vengeance.

As a reminder of this bloody adventure Bill carried the piece of scalp cut from his victim's head for many years. His brother, in communicating with the writer, stated that Bill kept this ghastly memento in his pocket-book until it became as hard as a piece of dried buffalo hide, and it is possible, if not indeed probable, that he kept it until death divided his possessions.

## CHAPTER XII.

IN August following Wild Bill's return from Wichita an incident occurred which resulted, some years afterward, in his renouncing his previous declarations to remain a bachelor, and the taking unto himself of a wife. The circumstances which culminated in so great a change were romantically singular and are well worthy of record in these otherwise sanguinary chronicles of stirring adventures.

The incident referred to grew out of the exhibition of Lake's Circus in Hays City during August, 1871. It was a rare occasion to see a circus so far West at that time, owing to the sparsely settled condition of middle and western Kansas, and when the caravan began to pitch tents preparatory for exhibition not only the citizens of Hays betrayed great curiosity, but every one within a radius of more than twenty miles came into town, by a variety of conveyances, to see the show.

Lake's Circus had been a standard entertainment for many years in the East and South, and in addition to the excellent reputation it bore it was well advertised by a novel free exhibition which became the rage even in the East—a grand balloon ascension just before opening the doors. The town council, like every one else in the neighborhood, though anxious to see the performance, held a meeting on the day preceding the time fixed for exhibition, and decided to charge Mrs. Lake, the proprietor of the circus, a license fee of fifty dollars; but before the municipal body adjourned Wild Bill stepped up and asked to be heard a moment. Permission having been granted, the town councilmen lit their pipes, passed the bottle, and leaning back in their chairs posed them-

selves while Bill expressed himself substantially as follows :

“I never made a speech in my life and I don’t want to begin now, but I never went back on a woman, and I’m going to give you some plain talk. You fellows live so far outside of civilization that your hearts have dried up like small potatoes left out in the sun, and as you can’t read the papers of course you don’t know nothing about what’s going on east of the coyote’s range.

“This circus that’s advertised to show and furnish a little amusement for us heathens is owned by a woman, one whose pluck catches my sympathy every time. Her husband, Bill Lake, one of the best clowns that ever sung a jolly song, was murdered down in Granby, Missouri, by a cowardly villain, named Jake Killian, on the 24th of August, 1869. The brave little widow, after burying her husband, had to either sell out or go on the road with the circus, and circumstances advised her to carry the show. My opinion is that any woman capable to run a circus is a darned sight bigger curiosity in these parts than the leather heads of this village ever heard of, and when I see so much pluck shown by a little woman I just feel like throwing in and helping her.

“Now, if you fellows that run this town knowed how to appreciate a good thing for the place, instead of charging Mrs. Lake a license, you would vote an appropriation to pay her for coming out here to show us heathens a first-class circus. If I’ve got any authority in Hays, Mrs. Lake ain’t going to pay this town a cent of license for showing, and if any man attempts to stop the show then just put it down that he’s got me to fight. That’s all I’ve got to say now, so drive on and we’ll see who pays the fiddler.”

When Bill concluded his "talk" the council of four decided to reconsider their action and remit the license, though this was, in the eyes of some, an extraordinary opportunity for starting a town treasury.

Mrs. Lake, learning of Bill's disinterested kindness, sent for him and expressed many thanks, after which she introduced him to all the members of her troupe, including her little daughter, Emma. After seeing the paraphernalia of the circus and shaking hands with the performers, Bill turned again to Mrs. Lake and said :

"Well, now, all this is fine enough, but do you know the greatest curiosity about this canvas is yourself; I never saw a woman before that could run anything, except with a broom handle, and to find one managing a big circus like this is a bigger sight than California Joe when he was tackled by a panther down in the Wachitas. I used to think that women never amounted to much outside of being mothers, and I guess I wouldn't give them that much credit if it hadn't happened that I had a mother myself, and a good one, too. But I've changed my opinion now, for if I could hitch up with such a business girl as yourself I'd go in search of the parson to-morrow."

This language, though full of rather profane metaphors and tempered with phrases little suited for "lute-like lovers' lips," nevertheless expressed in homely truths Bill's real sentiments, for he fell in love with Mrs. Lake, not only on first sight, but even before the meeting; he was caught on the hook of her reputation.

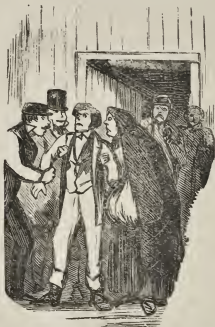
Mrs. Lake, though not fully understanding the somewhat incoherent address of her determined suitor, yet saw beneath his rough exterior a kind and healing sympathy, and a heart ever brave and willing to protect the weak. His face and form, too, were strikingly handsome, while his dress was that of a gentleman. In short, he excited the

affection of her nature, having already won her admiration. But they parted without avowals, and nearly three years passed before they met again, when admiration ripened into a warmer feeling, as will be seen in a subsequent chapter.

Becoming tired of the life which Hays City afforded, Bill resigned his position as U. S. Marshal, and in the spring of 1872 went to Kansas City, where he found a place bristling with sports and excitements well suited to his disposition. About the same time the writer, who had been occupying an editorial position on the Fort Scott Daily *Monitor*, accepted an offer made him by the proprietors of the Kansas City *Journal* and took up a residence in the Bluff City, where he became intimately acquainted with the heroic scout and learned much concerning his marvellous career.

Kansas City was a brisk town in 1872. It contained a population of nearly 30,000, and was the parent block off which was chipped all the gambling towns along the Kansas Pacific railroad. Games of chance, cards, keno, faro, roulette, dice, cock-mains, dog fighting and kindred means for hazarding money ran day and night. On the west side of Main, between Fourth street and Missouri avenue, there was nothing in the upper stories of the buildings except gamblers and gaming outfits. But this district was peculiar only in presenting an unbroken chain, as it were, of gambling dens. Fifth street, between Walnut and Main, was equally bad, even worse, because the rooms were less inviting and patronized by a more disreputable class. The lower end of main street and the levee were given over to brothel houses, about which a first-class item could nearly always be found. The writer now recalls to mind one evening when he was detailed to report three murders and one suspicious death.

A duel to the death was fought between two gamblers in a building almost opposite the police station, and not a morning passed for nearly two years that the calaboose was not filled with the very skimmings of degradation. But despite all this iniquity the city prospered, and gradually the viscious elements were eliminated, until the place assumed a proud position among the best cities of the country. To-day the infamies and demoralizing char-



A "Rough" on his way to the Lock-up.

acters which once filled her streets exist only in the history of her progress, and the hum of her commerce has long since displaced the sonorous voice of the keno caller and the death-crack of the revolver.

Notwithstanding the lawless, turbulent elements that gave character to Kansas City during the period of Wild Bill's residence in the place, he kept himself aloof from them, in his quiet, dignified, reserved way, and thus

never had occasion to unloose the tiger that slumbered beneath his calm exterior.

The peaceable tenor of Bill's way was disturbed on but one occasion while he remained in the Bluff City, and even this circumstance developed into a ludicrous rather than a sanguinary scene. Joe Siegmund, now proprietor of a railroad eating-house in Malvern, Arkansas, was at that time owner and keeper of the St. Nicholas Hotel, on the west side of the public square. Attached to the hotel was a bar and billiard room, which gathered an excellent patronage from the gambling gentry, and was nearly always full of excited young bloods taking their initiatory lessons in broils and drinking. On the occasion referred to, September 17, 1872, Bill walked into the saloon with an acquaintance and took a seat near one of the billiard tables, to watch a game then in progress. He had been in the saloon only a few minutes when four "larks," two-thirds full of Western cussedness, and the other third full of whisky, straggled around the room and stopped in front of Bill. One of the quartette, desirous of establishing a reputation for belligerency, having heard much about Wild Bill, and knowing him by sight, in a most insulting manner halloed out to his companions:

"Here, boys, is the great wild man of the prairies; the mighty untamable giaftycutus that eats three men every night before retiring and rises so hungry that he sometimes chews up a whole town for breakfast. Look out, I tell you, its just about his meal time now."

This harangue very naturally excited Bill's anger, but with apparent indifference to the insult he only replied:

"See here, young man, I'll lift you with the toe of my boot if you don't get away from here in five seconds."

The young fellow was spoiling for a row, and showing the butt of his pistol he abused Bill in a manner absolutely unbearable, calling him every vile name that a wicked native was capable of uttering. Persuading efforts only serving to increase the belicose fellow's propensities, Bill at length got up, and catching hold of his shoulder, administered a stunning blow on the young man's head which brought him to a realizing sense of his assailant's true nature. Then holding him by one ear, Bill boxed the impudent fellow's face until howls for mercy preserved him from a more severe beating. The lesson thus imparted was productive of excellent results, for the abashed "larker," with tears in his eyes, slunk away, followed by his amazed companions.

After the crowd had departed Bill expressed many regrets for having to use the young man so roughly, but every one present pronounced the whipping a most deserving act, as it would probably serve to make the fellow more respectful and considerate in his future conduct.

---

### CHAPTER XIII.

IN the fall of 1872 Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack had accepted a proposition made by Ned Buntline (Judson) to go on the stage and make a theatrical tour of the States in a play which he proposed to write for them. The enterprise proved such a decided success that for the season of 1873-4 the Buffalo Bill Combination, as it was called, made several flattering offers to Wild Bill to join them, and he was eventually induced to appear before the footlights in the bloody Indian drama entitled "Scouts of the Plains."



His first appearance on the stage was made in New York City, the cast for the play being as follows :

BUFFALO BILL.....	W. F. Cody.
TEXAS JACK.....	J. B. Omohundro.
WILD BILL.....	J. B. Hickok.
PALE DOVE (Wife of Texas Jack).....	Mlle. Morlacchi.
Jim Daws, a renegade horse thief.....	Frank Mordaunt.
Aunt Annie Carter.....	Miss Jennie Fisher.
Ella.....	Miss Lizzie Safford.
Lotta.....	Miss Eliza Hudson.
Uncle Henry Carter, a friend of the scouts.....	J. V. Arlington.
Nick Blunder, with song and dance.....	Walter Fletcher.
Tom Doggett, in cahoot with Daws.....	W. S. McEvoy.
Ebenezer Longlank, gov't peace commissioner.....	A. Johnson.
Tall Oak, a Kiowa, but on the square.....	W. A. Reid.
Big Thunder, a Comanche Chief.....	B. Meredith.
Bear Claw, Comanche Brave.....	H. Mainhall.
Raven Feather.....	J. W. Buck.

The performance was lacking in many features essential to what is called "smoothness," and especially in the part taken by Wild Bill.

Buffalo Bill, in his autobiography, describes Wild Bill's acting in the following manner :

"Although he had a fine stage appearance, was a handsome fellow and possessed a good, strong voice, yet when he went upon the stage before an audience, it was almost impossible for him to utter a word. He insisted that we were making a set of fools of ourselves, and that we were the laughing-stock of the people.

"Wild Bill was continually playing tricks on the members of the company, and it was his especial delight to torment the 'supers.' Quite frequently, in our sham Indian battles, he would run up to the 'Indians' (supers) and putting his pistol close to their legs fire and burn them with the powder instead of shooting over their heads. This would make them dance and jump, so that

it was difficult to make them fall and die—although they were paid twenty-five cents each for performing the ‘dying business.’ ”

Of his career during the period of his engagement with the Buffalo Bill Combination, Wild Bill left no memoranda from which his exploits might be gathered for publication, but several interesting adventures are given in Buffalo Bill’s autobiography, to which the writer is indebted for many important facts concerning Wild Bill, from which the following extracts are taken :

“One day at Titusville, Pennsylvania, while Burke, the business agent, was registering our names and making arrangements for our accommodation, several of us started for the billiard room, but were met by the landlord, who stopped me and said that there was a party of roughs from the lower oil regions who were spreeing, and had boasted that they were staying in town to meet the Buffalo Bill gang, and clean them out. The landlord begged of me not to allow the members of the troupe to enter the billiard-room, as he did not wish any fight in his house. To please the landlord, and at his suggestion, I called the boys up into the parlor and explained to them the situation. Wild Bill wanted to go at once and fight the whole mob, but I persuaded him to keep away from them during the day.

“In order to entirely avoid the roughs the members of the company entered the theatre through a private door from the hotel, as the two buildings joined each other. While I was standing at the door of the theatre taking tickets, the landlord came rushing up and said that Wild Bill was having a fight with the roughs in the bar-room. It seemed that Bill had not been able to resist the temptation of going to see what kind of a mob it was that wanted to test the pluck of the Buffalo Bill

party; and just as he stepped into the room, one of the bruisers put his hand on Bill's shoulder and said:

"'Hello, Buffalo Bill! we have been looking for you all day.'

"'My name is not Buffalo Bill; you are mistaken in the name,' was the reply.

"'You're a liar!' said the bruiser.

"Bill instantly knocked him down, and then seizing a chair he laid out four or five of the crowd on the floor, and then drove the rest out of the room. All this was done in a minute or two, and by the time I got down stairs, Bill was coming out of the bar-room, whistling a lively tune.

"'Well! said he, 'I have been interviewing that party that wanted to clean us out.'

"'I thought you promised to come into the Opera House by the private entrance?'

"'I did try to follow that trail, but I got lost among the cañons, and then I ran in among the hostiles,' said he; 'but its all right now; they won't bother us any more.'

"'We heard no more of them after that.'"

When the company reached Portland, Maine, to fulfill an engagement, another incident occurred wherein Wild Bill again distinguished himself, though not in a personal combat. The leading members of the troupe stopped at the United States Hotel, a large caravansary at which boarded several bachelor merchants of the town. On the night succeeding the first performance, Bill retired to bed shortly after twelve o'clock, feeling unusually tired, owing to a long walk he had taken during the day. Before lying down he discovered that the room adjoining his was occupied by several persons engaged in some amusement which caused them to make considerable

noise; he retired to bed, however, and tried to sleep despite the tumult of his neighbors, but finding, at length, that the noise increased with no likelihood of abating soon, he got up with the intention of either suppressing the racket or having a first-class row. In partial undress he knocked at the door of his unknown neighbors only to find that the room was occupied by five of Portland's leading business men, and that their noise was the result of a game of poker, spiced with liquid refreshments of savory perfume. Before making known the purpose of his visit the party invited him to join them in the game and partake of the bottle which was now well nigh empty. Nothing ever afforded Bill so much pleasure as a game of poker, and to indulge this gratification he was always ready to sacrifice a night's rest. He therefore entered into the sport of the game and after playing until the party were fairly exhausted both in body and purse he got up from the table seven hundred dollars better off than when he sat down. In order that such pleasant company might not separate without some benefit he generously gave them this parting advice:

"Gentlemen, I appreciate your hospitality, and especially the good luck in which I have played to-night, therefore I will tell you a little secret, for it may prove very valuable to you all hereafter; never wake up a stranger, destroy his rest, and invite him to take a hand in a game of poker with you. Good night."

Buffalo Bill, in conversation with the writer, told the following amusing story, which I will try to repeat nearly in his own language:

"When I had arranged terms with Wild Bill to appear with my company, we were in New York playing an engagement, and I was stopping at the Metropolitan Hotel. Bill arrived in New York after dark, and being

unacquainted with the city—this being his first visit there—he took a hack, instructing the driver to take him to the Metropolitan Hotel. Upon arriving at the house, Bill asked the driver his charges.

“‘Five dollars, sir,’ was the reply.

“‘And you wouldn’t accept anything less, would you?’ asked Bill.

“‘No, sir, that’s the charge, and nothing less.’

“Bill then handed the driver five dollars, at the same time striking him a blow in the face that sent him plowing up the settlings of the gutter. A policeman very soon came after Bill, but bail being furnished by me, he was kept out of the toms; but the next day I paid a fine of \$10 for him. This was his first experience in New York.

“We had two or three rehearsals together before Bill made his appearance, and even then he was required to say only a few words. The first scene in which he was cast represented a camp fire, around which Wild Bill, Texas Jack and myself were sitting telling stories. In order to carry out the scene so that it should be a faithful counterfeit of the reality, we had a whisky bottle filled with cold tea which we passed from one to the other at the conclusion of each story. When it came Bill’s turn to relate an adventure I passed him the bottle, and taking it in the way with which he was so familiar, he commenced draining the contents. I say commenced, because he stopped very suddenly and spurted the tea right out on the stage, at the same time saying, in a voice loud enough for the audience to hear him: ‘You must think I’m the worst fool east of the Rockies, that I can’t tell whisky from cold tea. This don’t count, and I can’t tell a story under the temptation unless I get real whisky.’ I tried to remonstrate with him, while the audience fairly shook down the galleries with their cheers. At first I was greatly

mortified, but it did not take long to convince me that Wild Bill had unconsciously made a big hit. I therefore sent out for some whisky, which Bill drank, and then told his story with excellent effect."

Wild Bill remained with the combination until the spring of 1874, when, at Rochester, N. Y., he parted abruptly from the combination. But before deciding to cancel his engagement he met Mrs. Lake, who, by chance being in Rochester, went to see the performance. Buffalo Bill had frequently heard Wild Bill declare his admiration for this lady, and when he discovered her in the audience he immediately informed Wild Bill of the fact and offered to introduce him again. The result was that Mrs. Lake and Wild Bill met and in the few moments they were together Bill said:

"Mrs. Lake, I don't know how to court, because I never did any of it in my life, but I've been thinking about you ever since we met in Hays City. Fact is, I'd be mighty glad to hitch up in harness with you, because I think we'd make a splendid team."

Mrs. Lake replied, "I don't know, Bill, how well we would suit each other, but at the present time my business is in such a condition that I couldn't think of marrying."

"How soon do you suppose you could straighten up matters so that we could go to the parson together?" enquired Bill.

"Well, it will require two years probably to settle my affairs, but your proposition comes so suddenly and unexpectedly that I should have to think about it, for I don't know that it would be proper for me to marry again," was Mrs. Lake's reply, indicating that she was not indifferent to the offer made her.

"I don't want to insist, but at the same time you suit

me to a dot, and I'd give my eyes to marry you; therefore I'll give you time to consider. I've got to go on the stage now to kill a few Indians to please this congregation, but when the show is out, maybe I might see you over at the Osborne House."

Bill thus left Mrs. Lake, but contrary to his expectations, did not see her again until 1876.

When he was called for his part during the same evening's performance, he resumed his old annoying practice of singeing the "supers" legs, and carried the trick so far this time that Buffalo Bill remonstrated so sharply that, without saying a word, Wild Bill doffed his buckskin suit, and resuming his usual dress, walked out of the theatre, refusing to appear any more with the combination. Before he left Rochester, however, Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack made up a purse between them of one thousand dollars and gave it to him as an evidence of their continued friendship.

Being considerably flush for a scout, Wild Bill went to New York, and while there, in a very laudable effort to break a faro bank, got himself ingloriously "busted." In this condition a theatrical manager approached him with a liberal proposition, so that for a second time he became a votary of Thespis, coming again before the public with the Wild Bill combination. But he had evidently struck a blind pocket of ill luck, for after a few fitful weeks of uncertainty the concern became pecuniarily *defunct*. After Bill had left the new combination the manager immediately reorganized his troupe and replaced Wild Bill by a cheaper character. Everywhere the company performed they advertised the renowned Wild Bill as their leading star, a member of the troupe being engaged to personate the distinguished scout on and off the stage alike. Wild Bill was not long in learning of this trick

and at once decided to get satisfaction by undeceiving the deceiver. Accordingly, learning that the company was to appear at Binghamton, N. Y., he went there to witness the performance. Waiting until the plot was developing much interest to the audience, when the bogus Wild Bill was shooting and slashing his way through a band of howling Comanches, he leaped upon the stage, and grabbing the manager, flung him bodily into the orchestra, and then knocked the personator of his character through the scenes, regardless of the knives and pistols and tomahawks carried by the Indians.

This novel procedure precipitated an intermission, during which Bill unconcernedly resumed his seat and shouted to the company to proceed with the show.

Information of the interruption having reached the municipal officers, a policeman was sent up to arrest Bill. He was easily found, but when the officer asked him to consider himself under arrest the reckless scout replied:

"How numerous are you?"

"I am alone; why do you ask?"

"Well, I would advise you to call up some assistance."

The policeman took his advice and went out and soon returned with a brother officer. The two then approached Bill and asked him to accompany them.

"How numerous are you now?" Bill asked.

"There are two of us."

"Then I would advise you to go out on another recruiting expedition."

The two policemen, anxious to avoid a conflict with the noted scout, then called the sheriff, who requested Bill to submit to arrest, and had no difficulty in taking him out of the theater and keeping him in charge until the following morning, when his trial took place before the city judge. The circumstances of the row having





PUNISHING A BOGUS CHARACTER.



been detailed, Bill was fined three dollars and costs, but his satisfaction in punishing the bogus character more than compensated him for his expense and trouble.

Leaving the East, Bill went directly to Kansas City and from there to Cheyenne, a place he had not visited for several years. Here he drifted to a faro bank which was run by a gambler named Boulder. Bill had only two hundred dollars with him and he commenced the game by staking small amounts. Losing all these, he played up for an average by doubling. Staking fifty dollars he also lost that, but immediately put down another fifty dollar bill. Boulder, who was banking, told Bill, who was a stranger to him, that the limit was twenty-five dollars and that he couldn't play above that sum.

"Why," enquired Bill, "didn't you just take fifty dollars of my money?"

"Well," answered Boulder, "I won't let you play that amount any more."

"You won't?" replied Bill, "then I'll see why; that fifty dollar bill lays on the tray, and if my card don't turn, the money is yours, but if it does come out, then I'll have fifty dollars of your money or there 'll be fun here, that's all."

From this a war of words followed, until Bill struck Boulder on the head with a heavy walking cane, which rolled him off a substantial seat. Several bouncers for the establishment rushed upon Bill, but he knocked them in a most artistic manner, until finding the fighting too progressive he jumped into a corner and jerked out two pistols. At this juncture the bar-keeper, attending the saloon down stairs, hearing the noise, ran up and discovering the situation, cried out:

"Look out, boys, that's Wild Bill!"

\*This information acted like magic; the tempest was becalmed, and a moment later Bill was alone.

On the following day Boulder, although still nursing a badly damaged head, called on Bill and producing champagne and cigars, the two settled their difference amicably.

Some time after the killing of Phil Cole, his brother, a well-known character in the far West, came to Hays City with the expressed determination of avenging his relative's death. Wild Bill had only a few days before gone to New York to join the Buffalo Bill Combination. Learning this fact, Cole professed to be deeply chagrined, saying:

"Yes, that is just my luck. I've come one thousand miles to kill Wild Bill, only to find that the coward has left the country; but I'll just lay for him a while in these regions, and if he does come back we'll decide who is the handiest with pistols."

Weeks passed by, with Bill still in the East, wholly unconscious of Jim Cole's intentions, until at length, as already described, Wild Bill severed his connection with the troupe and returned West, going to Cheyenne. He had scarcely reached that place when he was apprised by a friend writing from Hays City that Jim Cole was on his track and was about ready to leave for Cheyenne to meet him. Bill gave little heed to this information, because such threats as Cole was making had grown old to him.

About two weeks after his arrival in Cheyenne, however, Bill suddenly became conscious of the danger which threatened him. This discovery was made in the following manner: He was sitting in Luke Murrin's saloon reading, when his attention was directed to two strangers who, entering, walked up to the bar and called for a drink. The order was given by Jim Cole, and

though Bill had never seen this man, he instantly recognized in his voice a similarity to that of Phil Cole's, and was thus brought to a realization of his danger.

By chance, at the time of this meeting, Wild Bill's only weapon was a small double-barreled pistol which Buffalo Bill had given him in New York; but still more disadvantageous was the fact that it contained but a single cartridge.

Behind the bar was a very large looking glass, and as the faces of Cole and his partner were turned toward the glass, Bill could study their features and keep himself prepared (though indifferently) for the emergency soon to arise. By a preconcerted signal the two men turned and drew their pistols simultaneously, but Bill was too quick for his assailants. With the one shot he killed Cole and almost at the same instant he threw the empty pistol with such force in the face of Cole's partner that he succeeded in rendering his aim harmless. To follow up this advantage and prevent the stranger from shooting again, Bill grabbed him and with a dexterous effort tripped him and threw him with such force that his head struck the counter and broke his neck.

The coroner "sat on" the two bodies the same day, and Wild Bill was duly arrested. A preliminary examination was had a few days after, and such positive testimony was adduced proving Cole's threats and determination, as well also as the circumstances of the attack made by the victims, that Bill was released on a verdict of justifiable homicide.

## CHAPTER XIV.

WILD BILL remained in Cheyenne only a short time, for meeting with a party of friends who were wandering about in quest of adventure, he proposed a visit to the Black Hills, which section was just then beginning to attract attention on account of important discoveries of gold. Two of the party—Tom Busey, of Laramie, and Doc McGregor, an old trapper, who had just left his season camp on the Nebraska river—were delighted with Bill's proposition, and a few days later, having packed their mules with provisions and mining utensils, the three started for the Hills.

After leaving Cheyenne there was but one practicable route to the point of destination, and this led along Sage Creek to the confluence of Cheyenne river, and followed the main stream to French Creek. After reaching this small water way the route lay through several large cañons, under the brow of one of which, on a level spot only a few hundred yards from the creek, the party pitched their camps. After a few days' hard work a comfortable cabin was constructed and prospecting began.

In comparatively comfortable quarters the three men continued their explorations for gold, meeting with much success and living luxuriously upon the abundant game with which the forests abounded. Notwithstanding the war-like tendencies of the Blackfeet and Sioux Indians who possessed that section of country, the party lived for a period of several months without interruption, nor were any Indians seen in the vicinity of their camp.

In the early part of April, 1875, however, while the party was still in camp, Bill met with an adventure which deserves to rank with the most marvelous of his many

escapes. Winter was still holding the creek in icy fetters and the ground remained covered with a crust of snow. The evening had been spent, as usual, in smoking and



The Cabin in the Black Hills.

reading well-worn books. Over the fire hung a pail of boiling beans and above the cheerful, blazing house logs were the rifles and wide-spreading antlers of a monstrous buck. This completed a perfect picture of frontier happiness, for such contentment is rarely found even in the most sumptuous elegance of metropolitan mansions.

Before supper was prepared—or rather before the beans were boiled sufficiently—Bill, who was acting as cook, discovered that more water was required to finish the cooking, and that the water bucket was empty. Putting on his coat, he took the bucket and a canteen—the only vessels in the camp used for holding water—and started for the stream. The moon was shining with scintillating lustre, lighting up the cañon and throwing out long shadows from the trees overhead.

As Bill was stooping to dip the water from a hole cut in the ice, chancing to glance about him he saw a large, silver-gray fox trotting on the ice up the creek. This was a prize of no inconsiderable value, the pelt being marketable readily at from fifty to sixty dollars. In a moment Bill pulled his pistol and fired at the animal, but succeeded in only breaking one of its hind-legs. The creek made a sharp turn at this point and in order that he might not lose the prize, Bill set out in pursuit, expecting soon to secure another shot. Every moment, just as an opportunity appeared on the point of being offered for a shot, the fox would dart behind some intervening object, so that it was useless for Bill to fire, and yet the distance between them continued only a few yards. In this manner the scout was lured mile after mile, unconscious of the distance he had traveled, until the large cañon rose up before him in black and singular grandeur. The moon had now gone down behind the towering hills, leaving the creek an indistinct line difficult to



follow. With all his persistent pursuit and lengthy journey he failed to capture the prize for which so much time and effort had been expended; for the growing darkness had enabled the fox to elude his pursuer and hide somewhere about the roots of the numerous trees which fringed the stream.

Retracing his steps again, Bill had proceeded but a



Wild Bill and the Fox.

short distance when he was startled by an unmistakable sound emanating from the direction of the camp. It was the distinct war-whoop of northern Sioux, and immediately apprehensions arose in his mind for the safety of his comrades. Anxious to render aid when it was doubly valuable, Bill ran down the creek with all possible speed, but before arriving near the camp he discovered a bright tinge in the atmosphere which told him that the cabin

was on fire. Still running swiftly he did not pause until reaching the opening leading down to the creek, when he saw a band of twenty or more Indians dancing around the burning timbers of his home and consuming the whisky which they had found in a keg in the cabin. There was presented before him a panorama replete with destruction and broken hopes. He saw the bleeding scalps of his comrades displayed as trophies of this murderous depredation, and realizing that there was nothing left for him to do but to look after his own safety, he decided to leave the country at once, on foot, as the stock of his party was now in the hands of the Indians, and make directly for Ft. Fetterman.

The well known cunning and suspicion peculiar to the Indians Bill knew would lead to an examination of the vicinity to discover if there were any others belonging to the camp whom chance had led away, and this examination he felt certain would result in a discovery of his trail and lead to pursuit. Acting on this belief he traveled with what speed he was capable, never stopping for rest during the entire night.

After daylight, on the following morning, observing no indications of a pursuit, and being almost worn out with fatigue, he lay down beside a tree and immediately fell asleep. It was fully an hour past mid-day when he awoke, and being as hungry now as he was tired before, he at once cast about with the hope of finding some kind of game upon which to satisfy his gnawing appetite. Fortune threw in his way a sage-hen, which a single shot dispatched, and upon this he soon made an excellent meal. Scattering the embers of the fire he had built that it might not readily afford fresh evidence of his trail, should it be pursued, Bill resumed the eastward march, hoping to gain Ft. Fetterman in the two days succeeding.

On the evening of the second day, while ascending to the summit of a knoll which lay in his route, looking away to the northwest, Bill discovered some suspicious spots on the rim of the horizon which bordered the prairie. Studying these for a few minutes, his keen sense of perception told him that the moving figures were those of Indians, while the direction indicated that they were on his track.

South of the place where Bill discovered his trailing enemies was a strip of heavy timber which he thought overhung the banks of upper Beaver Creek. Being less than three miles distant, he hoped to gain this covert and by wading in the stream throw the Indians off his track, which was now easily followed by impressions in the thin crust of snow still covering the ground. Hurriedly he set off, knowing that no time was to be lost, for the Indians were evidently riding at a fast pace, and were, perhaps, less than ten miles distant.

He had approached to within about one mile of the strip of woods when a troop of fifteen or more Sioux dashed over the knoll that had hid them from Bill's sight, and seeing the fleeing man they urged their horses to a run, shouting with exultation over the promise of a fresh victim.

Unfortunately for Bill, when he left the camp, harboring not the remotest suspicion of meeting with any adventure, he had taken with him but a single pistol, of six chambers, and even this weapon he had retained only from custom. Two chambers of the pistol had been emptied, and what defence he could now make lay in the four loads remaining.

A lively chase ensued, Bill running at his greatest speed, but it soon became apparent that his chances for escape were exceedingly small. To add to his embar-

rassment, having reached the timber several hundred yards in advance of his pursuers, he discovered that the stream, which was of considerable width and evidently deep, ran along the edge of the timber next to him, and that the bank was a ledge of shelving rocks fully fifteen feet in height. The creek was frozen over, to what thickness Bill had no means of ascertaining, but he was afraid to leap from the precipitous bank lest the ice should not be sufficiently strong to sustain his weight, and in that event results from the fall would either have killed him outright or caused such bodily injury as would have made him an easy victim to the Indians.

Bill had faced many dangerous dilemmas during his adventurous life, but for the time being he thought this one offered the least chances for escape. Had he been armed sufficiently, he thought, it were possible for him to seek the cover of some friendly tree, and thus partially protected fight with at least a faint hope of saving his scalp; but having only four bullets it was impossible to use them with sufficient economy for his present needs.

On came the whooping savages, but without discharging an arrow or firing a shot, evidently bent on capturing the fugitive and reserving him for the stake. Seeing that to run along the towering brink would only hasten his end, the intrepid scout turned upon his pursuers when they were within a few yards, and discharging every load in his pistol, saw three of his enemies fall dead and another wounded, apparently mortally. At this the Indians drew down their guns and bows, realizing that they had caught an obstinate Tartar that it were safer to kill than to capture. But Bill was too quick for them; taking desperate chances, as he discharged his last shot, and still holding his pistol in a position as if intending to

fire, he threw himself over the dangerous brink into the stream below.

It is singular how fortune follows the daring, but even more singular how lucky circumstances almost always arose to deliver Wild Bill when surrounding dangers seemed to offer no hope for escape. So it again transpired in descending from the stony ledge overhanging Beaver Creek, for instead of being dashed to pieces



Taking Desperate Chances.

or seriously crippled, Bill fell into an air-hole, and beyond the chill of a submersion, he escaped all serious results. The water was very deep, but he managed to keep well concealed from the Indians, and clambering under the ledge soon got onto the ice, which he found to be more than a foot in thickness. The red-skins, loth to lose a victim who had, for the time, so singularly

escaped them, rode up the bank of the stream, hoping to find a less precipitous place, where a safe descent might be made on horseback, and following back under the bank, yet capture the fugitive, or find his mangled body, from which some trophy might be obtained.

Bill continued his journey down the stream, always keeping under the protecting ledge. He expected the Indians would soon appear, and with this fear continually harassing him, he looked on every side for some shelter in which to hide. But there was nothing to help him out of the position which strange circumstances had forced him into. Darkness had now intervened, and this alone offered any hope; but even this seemed to be of little value after several hours of rapid traveling, when he still found no place at which he could ascend out of the cañon. On either side the bank rose in perpendicular walls, growing gradually higher as he advanced, and towering above him like grim monsters anxious to topple over and make sure of his destruction.

Having had nothing to eat since dining on the sagehen, he again became very hungry; but the chances of getting anything to eat were only equal to his chances of escape and reaching Ft. Fetterman. All night long, therefore, he journeyed on the ice, maintaining a watchful regard for every cleft and crevice in the cañon, fearful of each, lest it might be a passage-way for the Indians, and hoping that it might permit his ascent, for in following the devious ways of Beaver Creek he knew that, instead of going toward to the Fort, he was frequently traveling in an opposite direction.

As day began to break on the following morning, Bill discovered the protruding trunk of a large cedar tree, by which there was a very rugged but possible ascent up the side of the cañon. Being exceedingly tired, he concluded

to rest a while on the tree trunk, behind which he could screen himself from the observation of the Indians should they appear on the ice, and in which place he felt secure from detection by any one above him. The weather had moderated so much during the night that with the first rays of the morning sun not a trace of snow was left on the ice or ground, which was a kindness of nature toward the fugitive as grateful as it was unexpected. With a



Wild Bill's Miraculous Escape from the Indians.

feeling of partial relief, he gave way to exhaustion, and fell asleep hugging the trunk of his friendly shelter. When he awoke, several hours afterward, the sky was overcast with angry, threatening clouds, while a succession of heaven's cannonading presaged the terrible storm which was rapidly approaching. The rain soon began to fall in great drops, and in a short time afterward he

heard in the distance the mighty roar of rushing water as it came down the cañon. Appreciating the danger of his position, he was on the point of clambering up the rugged bank to escape the rising waters when his attention was attracted by the yells of Indians. Looking in the direction from whence the sounds proceeded, he witnessed with intense relief the struggles of his now fated enemies, tossed on the seething crests of the torrent as it tore down the cañon, lashing the rocks with the bodies of horses and Indians, stifling their despairing cries and sweeping them remorselessly in the dreadful billows. Fortune had again favored him. His enemies were buried in the destroying foam of the avalanche of grinding ice and water, and a sure way for his escape was opened at a time most opportune.

The Indians had evidently gone many miles up the creek bank before they found a place permitting their descent onto the ice, and they had followed down the stream only to be caught by the torrents of water which cut off all chances for their escape.

Bill climbed with great difficulty to the top of the bank, and marking a straight line eastward reached Fort Fetterman in an exhausted and famished condition four days after leaving his desolated camp.

---

## CHAPTER XV.

WILD BILL was well received by the soldiers garrisoned at Fetterman, and after relating the story of his wonderful adventures in the Black Hills there was great desire manifested to at once organize a campaign for the purpose of punishing the tribe that was responsible for the per-



petration of such an outrage. But Gen. Curtis, who had command of the troops, could not move without orders from Gen. Sheridan, and Bill therefore returned to Kansas City. His five months stay in the Hills, however, convinced him of the rich deposits of gold which that section contained, and he decided to organize an expedition from the States, with the view of leading a force into the auriferous region of such strength as would provide security against molestation from the Indians.

In furtherance of his scheme Bill visited several cities, but the season was now so far advanced that those whom he found willing to join such an expedition, prevailed upon him to wait until the following spring, 1876, when the trip could be made more advantageously.

Returning to Kansas City he remained for some time inactive owing to an attack of ophthalmia superinduced no doubt from the exposure he underwent while in the Black Hills. Dr. Thorne treated him for several months with such success that his eyesight, which was for a time entirely destroyed, was partly restored, but he never again regained his perfect vision.

In the latter part of February, 1876, Wild Bill again visited Cheyenne with the view of perfecting necessary arrangements with some of his friends of that place, for entering the gold region with his proposed expedition. By a singular coincidence (each being wholly unaware of the other's whereabouts,) Mrs. Lake also appeared in Cheyenne at the same time, visiting one of her relatives, Mr. S. L. Moyer. Each had been in the town nearly two weeks before either was aware of the other's presence, as no one in the place knew of the tender regard that existed between them, or even of their acquaintance. One evening, while in conversation with an intimate friend, Bill spoke of his admiration for Mrs. Lake, and

forthwith he was struck with astonishment by the declaration of his friend :

“ Why, Mrs. Lake is in the city now ; didn’t you know it ? ”

“ Oh, you’re joking,” answered Bill ; “ if I was certain this town held her now, you could just prepare for a wedding, and that mighty quick, too.”

“ No, I’m not joking, and if you ’ll go over with me to Mr. Moyer’s, to whom I’ll introduce you, I’ll show you Mrs. Lake.”

This proposition satisfied Bill, and the two immediately started for Mr. Moyer’s house, where, happy realization, Bill met his future wife.

Becoming directly acquainted with the affectionate relation sustained between Bill and Mrs. Lake, Mr. Moyer and his family withdrew and left them alone. Wild Bill then renewed his suit, and pressed his claims with such persistency that the engagement was perfected and arrangements concluded for the wedding, which it was agreed should take place on the following day.

Several intimate friends of Bill were surprised to receive invitations, on the morning of March 5th, to witness the wedding ceremonies of J. B. Hickok, (Wild Bill) and Mrs. Agnes Lake Thatcher, in the afternoon of the same day. Of course they all responded, and when the contracting parties stood up it was before an audience numbering about twenty persons. The Rev. W. F. Warren, a Methodist divine of Cheyenne, performed the service at Mr. Moyer’s residence, and after receiving many congratulations the couple took the evening train east and went directly to St. Louis, where, after spending a few days, they proceeded to Cincinnati, where numerous relatives of Mrs. Lake lived. Here they were received with many kind manifestations from all who

knew them, and their new life thus began under auspicious promises for future happiness.

In this connection it is proper to give the reader an introduction to the new wife of our hero, especially since Mrs. Hickok is a lady whose name has been prominently before the people of both continents for many years.

The widow of Wild Bill is a native of Cincinnati, where she was born in 1832; her maiden name was Agnes Thatcher, and her parents were persons of eminent standing. At the age of fifteen she married William Lake who soon afterward became proprietor of a circus and followed the life of a showman until his unprovoked murder in 1869. As an arena clown Lake had few equals and his name was sufficient to pack a canvas.

Mrs. Lake, at an early age, manifested a talent for the profession which her husband so fittingly adorned. She was the original "Mazeppa," and played this great character throughout Europe and America; she also appeared on the theatre boards in many other starring parts, always with success. After joining her husband's circus she became the greatest slack-wire performer in America, and was the first person to execute the daring feat of trundling a wheelbarrow, on a small wire, over the centre-pole of a circus tent. But her most distinguished performances were in equestrian acts, and especially as a *menage* rider. In this she never had an equal until her own daughter, Emma, arose to a position of prominence when the mother had retired from the arena. In her travels—1867-8—she visited the largest cities of Prussia, and in Berlin she appeared as "Mazeppa" at the Victoria Theatre, rendering the part in the German language. So well pleased was the Emperor William, who witnessed the performance, that he sent her an autograph letter of thanks, and recommended her

as the most finished actor then in the Empire. For a time she also performed the daring feat of entering a den of lions twice each day, and was known as "Senorita Agnes, the Lion Queen." After the death of her husband, for more than three years she successfully managed the Hippo-Olympiad Circus, attending to all the managerial details of the business and taking the part of a regular performer also. An interesting book of itself might be written concerning the life of this excellent woman, who now, nursing the grief which misfortune bequeathed her—lamenting the loss of two loving husbands, both of whom were the victims of foulest murder—she lives only in the ambition of her beautiful daughter, her only child, who now delights the Western world with her electrical horsemanship.

Miss Emma Lake, though only twenty-five years of age, is a phenomenal circus rider, whose reputation has spread over both hemispheres. She is indisputably without an equal on horseback, especially as a *menage* rider. Beautiful of face and figure, lithe and sinuous as the mother of grace, indomitable and delighted with her profession, she has achieved a rank which the most ambitious woman can never hope to excel. In addition to her achievements in the ring she is a lady of extraordinary intelligence and culture, possessing a finished education and most refined sensibilities. Her literary efforts have found a conspicuous place in the leading journals of America, and some of her poetical productions exhibit decided talent. Miss Emma Lake, as she is known among those of her profession, is the wife of Gil. Robinson, jr., son of the celebrated John Robinson, of circus fame. She has been traveling, however, with P. T. Barnum's Exhibition for several years, receiving the largest salary of any person employed by that

well-known showman. Her residence is in Cincinnati, where she has an elegant home. She has one child, a beautiful little girl, who is the pride of the neighborhood, and with her lives Mrs. Hickok, whose every want is administered to with true filial devotion.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

WILD BILL remained with his wife in Cincinnati nearly two weeks, and then giving her an affectionate good-bye, went directly to St. Louis for the purpose of getting his proposed expedition organized. Excitement over the Black Hills discoveries was now at fever heat, and a lively business was being done at Bismarck and Cheyenne in fitting out parties who were rushing into the gold region with reckless haste. A great number of those intent on reaching the Hills went by boat from St. Louis to Bismarck and then overland. But Bill considered the route from Cheyenne as the most expeditious and practicable; and his company was organized to proceed that way, where outfits could be had much cheaper than at Bismarck.

It required several days to make up the desired number of men, as Bill had fixed upon not less than one hundred and fifty, and during this period of organization he daily visited the writer, who was then city editor of the *Evening Dispatch*, and reported the progress of his scheme.

In the latter part of March about one hundred persons had joined the expedition at St. Louis, and nearly as many more had enlisted under Carpenter at Kansas City, so that the two companies were consolidated and started

to the Black Hills via Cheyenne on the 12th of April. The party was guided through safely, reaching the Hills in the first part of May. In the meantime the town of Deadwood had sprung into being and was filling up with the rapidity only known to mining towns. Rough shanties and tents dotted the hillsides; creaking wagons marked out the streets by establishing roadways, and a hundred saloons and other evil concomitants loomed up in swelling the town's importance.

Having settled the men, or rather discharged his duties



Deadwood in Embryo.

as guide, Bill established himself in Deadwood to watch for an opportunity to make a profitable strike. He had located several claims and was making arrangements to complete the necessary assessment work by trading claims for labor. Having everything running to his like, he remained in the Hills, hoping to sell one or more of his claims when the prospects should invite a suitable offer.

Deadwood, like every other big mining town that has yet been located in the West, was full of rough charac-

ters, renegades, cut-throats, gamblers and the devil's agents generally. Night and day the wild orgies of depraved humanity continued; a fiddler was an important personage, provided he would hire out to saw all night in a saloon, and the concert singer was a bonanza, especially if the voice were clothed in petticoats. The arbiter of all disputes was either a knife or pistol, and the graveyard soon started with a steady run of victims. Sodom and Gomorrah were both dull, stupid towns compared with Deadwood, for in a square contest for the honors of moral depravity the Black Hills' capital could give the people of the Dead Sea cities three points in the game and then skunk them both.

Wild Bill indulged his propensities more or less while in Deadwood, but continued to prospect and avoided difficulties of every character until the day of his murder.

In my first "Life of Wild Bill" I was led into making a very unjust allusion, which was as far from the truth as the poles are apart. This arose from information which I believed trustworthy but which I definitely ascertained sometime afterward, was a malicious report, and the pleasure I now have in correcting the evil which I unconsciously committed by that act is such that I should be glad to extend the excuse and correction far beyond the limits of this book, and make my assurances of regret in person.

The allusion referred to was in doubting the affection of Bill for his wife and asserting that a final separation had occurred between them before Bill left for the Hills. The facts are, no man ever loved a woman more ardently than Bill did his wife; she was in his very soul; her spirit was his ruling mentor and all his ambition was centered in her happiness. How true this is may be in-

ferred from the following letter, the very last Bill ever wrote. I copy from the original, which is at present in my possession :

DEADWOOD, DAKOTA, July 17th, 1876.

MY OWN DARLING WIFE AGNES :

I have but a few moments left before this letter starts. I never was as well in my life ; but you would laugh to see me now—just got in from prospecting. Will go away again to-morrow. Will write again in the morning, but God knows when the letter will start. My friend will take this to Cheyenne if he lives.

I don't expect to hear from you, but it is all the same ; I know my Agnes and only live to love her. Never mind, Pet, we will have a home yet, then we will be so happy. I am almost sure I will do well here.

The man is hurrying me. Good bye, dear wife. Love to Emma.

J. B. HICKOK.

This letter is copied verbatim. It will be seen that he promises to write again on the following day, but he either neglected to fulfill the promise or the letter miscarried, for the one here reproduced was the last Mrs. Hickok ever received from him.

The last act in the life of Wild Bill was fast approaching when this letter was written. Though he lived in apparent peace with every one in Deadwood, far removed as he was from the scenes of his personal conflicts, where he looked for enemies in every corner and at every turn, yet even here, while among new found friends, it was destined that he should die at the hands of as cowardly a villain as God ever placed on this sphere to disgrace the name of humanity.

Returning from another prospecting tour along the gulches in the Black Hills, Wild Bill repaired to a saloon kept by Nuttall & Mann, and engaged in a game of poker. His opponent in the game was a fellow he had





ASSASSINATION OF WILD BILL.



never seen before, named Jack McCall. This man had been at work for three or four different parties in the Hills, and as his previous history was unknown, he passed for a "gentleman," to use the term in a qualified sense. The two played for several hours and until the game was concluded by Bill having won largely from McCall—about five hundred dollars. But though the play had been a very disastrous one for Jack; yet he appeared in no wise ill-humored, and acknowledged that he had been beaten in a fair game.

In the afternoon of the second day (Wednesday, August 2d), after his successful bout with McCall, Bill again engaged in a game of poker at the same saloon, with Carl Mann, Charley Rich and Captain Massey, a Missouri river pilot. The quartette of gamblers were all laughing and joking as the game progressed, indicating that none had lost so heavily as to disturb the equanimity of temper. About three o'clock P. M. Jack McCall was seen entering the saloon in a careless manner, so that not the least suspicion was created as to the cowardly, villainous purpose of his visit. But with that calculating carefulness with which an arrant coward always conceals his designs, McCall walked up to the bar and around behind his victim. Then, with an anxious glance lest some one of the party might detect his movements, he jerked out a large pistol and placing the muzzle within a yard of Wild Bill's head, fired, exclaiming at the time, but in a subdued voice: "Damn you, take that!" The ball went crashing through the back of Bill's head and came out at the center of his right cheek; but before it had spent its force it struck Capt. Massey in the left arm, shivering the bone, and was so firmly embedded that it had to be cut out. Wild Bill dropped his head forward, the cards fell from

his relaxing grasp, and, in a succession of slow movements, he slipped out of the chair and then fell prone upon the floor. The murderer's work had been thoroughly done, for his victim died without a convulsive shiver and lay before him covered with a growing pallor; but on the face, though the shattered cheek was crimsoned with a flow of richest blood, the last smile still lingered, as if to proclaim the triumph of his manhood, in showing how bravely he could die.

After firing the fatal shot McCall drove the crowd before him out of the saloon and resisted arrest until the fear possessed him that some avenging friend of Bill's would slay him. It was then the assassin offered to submit to a trial and accept the consequences of his act. He was taken to a building in the lower part of the town, where a volunteer guard was placed over him.

Within an hour after the murder the whole of Deadwood was in a furore of excitement. A coroner's jury was soon empaneled with C. H. Sheldon as foreman, which, after a short inquiry, rendered a verdict in accordance with the circumstances as here related.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

AFTER receiving the verdict of the coroner's jury, immediate preparations were made for the trial of the murderer. McDaniel's theatre was chosen as the most suitable place for conducting the proceedings, as it was certain a very large crowd would be in attendance. There was no regular court at Deadwood, and in the absence of duly qualified officers it was determined to conduct the

trial according to the usages of self-constituted courts outside the pale of established legal jurisdictions.

A meeting of citizens was held at the theatre during the evening, at which preparations were made for the trial. Judge W. L. Kuykendall presided over the assemblage, and after stating the object of the meeting he was unanimously chosen as Judge in the trial of the murderer. Isaac Brown was elected sheriff, and one deputy and twelve guards were appointed by the presiding officer. After proceeding thus far an adjournment was had until nine o'clock the following day, in order that some time might be had for necessary preparations, and to convey an announcement of the results of the meeting to the miners of the Whitewood and Deadwood districts.

At the appointed hour, on Thursday, the meeting was called pursuant to adjournment, when the action of the preceding meeting was submitted in a report read by J. A. Swift, and adopted. Col. May was chosen to conduct the prosecution while the prisoner selected A. B. Chapline to defend him, but as Chapline was quite ill at the time, Judge Miller was named instead. A committee of three, consisting of Mr. Reid, of Gayville, Jos. Harrington, of Deadwood, and Mr. Cain, of Montana City, was next appointed by the chair, whose duty it was to select the names of thirty-three residents from each of their respective districts, and from the names thus submitted the jury of twelve was to be drawn.

Having now completed all the necessary arrangements another adjournment was ordered until two o'clock P. M. when the trial was to begin.

The excitement on the streets continued to increase and sentiments of every character were fully expressed. Some favored a lynching before trial, a few deemed the

act justifiable, while a greater number were disposed to abide the finding of the jury after a fair trial.

Promptly at the hour appointed the chosen officers filed into the theater building, the prisoner being conducted by the sheriff and guards. The improvised court room, however, was fairly packed an hour before, and the officers therefore had to elbow their way to the platform.

Jack McCall, as he took a seat on the right of Judge Kuykendall, presented a most forbidding appearance. He was twenty-five years of age, but dissipation and a low life had painted their stains on his ugly features. His brow was low and retreating, as a sign of his cowardly and brutal propensities, while sandy hair, small moustaches and cross-eyes completed the unmistakable evidences of his villainous character. He attempted to appear indifferent and assume the role of a desperado who had been accustomed to acting such parts, but despite this effort the chicken liver he possessed made his flesh creep and the blanche and color of his cheeks come and go like a patient badly overcome with intermittent fever.

The first proceeding was a selection of jurors. The ninety-nine names submitted by the committee were written on slips of paper and placed in a hat, from which they were drawn by the deputy sheriff. As each name was called the person responding thereto was examined touching his qualifications to serve as a juror in the case. Nearly all had either formed or expressed an opinion as to the guilt of the prisoner, and the venire was therefore almost exhausted before the necessary panel of twelve was chosen, and which consisted of the following persons: John Mann, J. J. Bumfs, L. D. Brokow, Edward Burke, L. A. Judd, J. H. Thompson, Charles Whitehead, John E.

Thompson, Geo. S. Hopkins, K. F. Towle, J. F. Cooper and Alexander Travis. The jury being sworn, the trial proceeded. The witnesses examined were Charles Rich, Carl Mann, Samuel Young, an employe at the saloon, Geo. M. Shingle, who was also a witness of the tragedy, Isaac Brown, who arrested the prisoner, Patrick H. Smith, H. H. Pitkins and Ira Ford. The last three were introduced on behalf of defendant to prove his character as a peaceable man. The evidence was all in accordance with the facts of the tragedy as reported, except that considerable time was consumed in eliciting opinions of witnesses respecting the character of both Wild Bill and his murderer, and of course a great variety of opinions were expressed.

After the testimony was concluded, the prisoner was asked if he desired to make any statement.

"Yes," was his response, "I have a few words to say," and stepping down from the perch on which he had been sitting into the auditorium, he placed one hand inside the front opening of his woolen shirt, and throwing back his head in an imperious manner, delivered himself as follows: "Well, men, I have but few words to say. Wild Bill killed my brother, and I killed him. Wild Bill threatened to kill me if I ever crossed his path. I am not sorry for what I done; if I had to, I would do the same thing over again." He then returned to his place on the stage.

The prosecuting attorney, instead of making an opening argument, used the time in bringing out the testimony of a number of persons who swore that Wild Bill had been much abused and a reputation given him for atrocious deeds which he never deserved; that in every instance when he killed any one the act had always been declared as justifiable by every fair-minded person.

Judge Miller, the defendant's counsel, then followed, making a very able appeal in behalf of his client ; though not a scintilla of evidence had been produced showing that Wild Bill had killed McCall's brother, yet he used the assertion made by the prisoner with telling effect. He eloquently enlarged on the intention of the defendant, who, as he asserted, had not considered the act as murder, but a just revenge for the killing of his brother ; that Bill's dexterity in the use of firearms rendered it impossible for the prisoner to meet his victim "on the square," as such an attempt would have been almost equal to suicide. In addition to this kind of argument the Judge closed with the following appeal to the jury : "Men, comrades, you have been chosen to decide the guilt and punishment of one of your own companions ; look upon the honest countenance of this poor boy who is being tried for his life because he struck down the assassin of a dearly beloved brother ; note, particularly, that unflinching and innocent eye, which could not possibly belong to a man who could do any wrong," and continued for nearly half an hour in coining similar extravagant qualifications which were a very parody on the brute who was on trial ; or as a correspondent who was present at the trial said, in his comments on the Judge's panegyric, "the eye, the face, and in fact everything about the prisoner, denoted villainy and iniquity as an innate part of his nature."

The Judge certainly deserved credit for making so able an effort when there was no real basis upon which to rest a valid defense.

Col. May made the closing argument on behalf of the prosecution, and those who knew him best declared it the ablest speech of his life. After rehearsing the facts of the case he declared that "if this be not murder then



there never was murder committed. The deceased in his bloody winding-sheet, from his mountain grave, demanded that a proper punishment be meted out to his villainous assassin." He called attention to the fact that no testimony had been adduced to show that Wild Bill had ever done a single unlawful act, but contended that in every instance where he had shed human blood that he was justifiable in so doing, and that no evidence had been submitted to show that he had threatened the life of the prisoner. "It is strange," said the Colonel, "if the prisoner has been living for years with a sworn determination to kill Wild Bill, that only two days ago he should have been pleasantly engaged playing cards with him." He appealed for justice in the name of law and civilization, and begged the people not to suffer such an atrocious and unprovoked crime to go unpunished lest the barbaric code of the Indians become the arbiter of disputes.

The trial was not concluded until six o'clock in the evening, at which time the case was given to the jury, and they repaired to a wing of the theatre to prepare their verdict. As was afterward ascertained, when the jury first voted there were eleven for acquittal and one for conviction. Some debate then followed among them, when another juror proposed that the prisoner be fined in the sum of twenty dollars and then released, or be committed until the fine should be paid. After an hour and thirty minutes of discussion the jury came to a compromise conclusion, and when they returned into court, which remained in session awaiting a verdict, the foreman handed to the clerk their finding, which read as follows :

"We, the jurors, find the prisoner, Mr. John McCall, not guilty.

"CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Foreman."

The prisoner was immediately released, and some few who sanctioned this endorsement of one of the foulest, premeditated and utterly indefensible murders ever committed, had the audacity to congratulate McCall on his acquittal. Thus ended this self-constituted farcical court, and the citizens who attended the trial at once went to their homes and cleaned up their weapons. If the society of Deadwood permitted one man to slaughter another with impunity in the manner McCall had killed Wild Bill, then every person in the place recognized the overshadowing importance of being prepared for emergencies.

---

## CHAPTER XVIII.

AFTER the inquest on the remains of Wild Bill the body was given in charge of Charley Utter (Colorado Charley) whose friendship for the dead man had existed for many years. A bier, or litter, was made by laying some boards across two poles, on which the body was placed and carried by a procession of friends across the creek to Utter's camp. Here the final preparations for the funeral were made, and that too with a hand which took this last means of demonstrating the depth of its friendship. Charley was much affected by the death of his old comrade, and like a true brother during life, his love and admiration intensified when death severed the bond of companionship.

A romantic and beautiful arbor was constructed at the foot of the most majestic trees in the gulch by Utter's camp, under which the body of Wild Bill was laid, while a fine coffin was ordered, and the following funeral notice

was printed and distributed among all the miners of the district :

FUNERAL NOTICE.

DIED in Deadwood, Black Hills, August 2d, 1876, from the effects of a pistol shot, J. B. Hickok, (Wild Bill), formerly of Cheyenne, Wyoming. Funeral services will be held at Charley Utter's camp on Thursday afternoon, August 3d, 1876, at three o'clock, P. M.

All are respectfully invited to attend.

At the appointed hour, notwithstanding the large number who were in attendance at the trial, fully fifty friends and admirers of the deceased assembled at Utter's camp ready to pay the last rites of respect to him whose life had been such a fitful dream. The mortal remains of Wild Bill now reposed in a handsome coffin mounted with silver ornaments and covered with black cloth. The body was handsomely dressed in the best clothes obtainable in Deadwood. A more complete picture of perfect rest and resignation was never seen than that which the dead scout presented. The gaping wound in his cheek had been deftly closed and was scarcely noticeable ; his long, beautiful, chestnut hair lay parted evenly across his forehead and fell gracefully over his broad shoulders. The face was a study for any beholder ; instead of manifesting the agony of death, there was nothing but peace and contentment on his features ; the lips were slightly parted as if still smiling at the last joke which was passing around the table when the fatal shot was fired. Beside him, in his coffin, lay his carbine rifle that he had carried for many years, and was now to be buried with him according to a wish he had often expressed.

A grave had been prepared in a most romantically lovely spot on the mountain side, over which spread the foliage of redolent pine trees, and around which was a profusion of wild flowers, freighting the air with deli-

cious perfumes. On every side, making the landscape replete with nature's grandest effects, were towering boulders, from between the crevices of which peeped out fragrant sweet williams and violets, mingling their incense with the concert of warbling voices in the branches overhead. It was such a spot as the brave sleeper would have selected for his sepulcher, for he loved the forest solitudes, and made companionship with the wilds of the wilderness.

Here, under the bright arch of an auspicious heaven, under the arbor nature had prepared with lavish hand, Wild Bill was laid in that sleep which, perchance, is eternal waking, and with him were all his animosities, his desires for revenge, his ambitions, and his expectations.

A clergyman read an impressive funeral service over the grave, after which the earth's warm, virgin sod, full of bursting seeds and growing flowers, soon covered the remains of the greatest scout, spy and fighter any nation, perhaps, ever produced.

A large stump stood at the head of the grave, and upon this was rudely carved the following :

"A brave man, the victim of an assassin, J. B. Hickok (Wild Bill), aged 48 years ;\* murdered by Jack McCall, August 2, 1876."

The funeral ceremonies having been completed, those who had assisted in the last services went directly to the theater building where the trial of McCall was still in progress. After hearing the verdict read and seeing the murderer liberated, California Joe, an old friend of Bill's, who chanced to be in Deadwood when the assassination occurred, stepped up to McCall and said :

---

\*At the time of his death Wild Bill's age was 39 years, 10 months and 12 days.

“Look a here, young chap, these here regions haint very healthy for you jist now ; so you’d better lose no time in clearing outen these diggins, er yer skin won’t hold water no morn’n a camp sieve inside o’ twenty-four hours.”

At night several of the murdered man’s friends held a secret meeting, at which it was decided to lynch McCall, but their plans were frustrated by the assassin having taken California Joe’s warning, as he found the climate suddenly very oppressive and injurious.

The following beautiful poem was written by Capt. Jack Crawford, the poet scout, one of Wild Bill’s most intimate comrades, a sketch of whose life will be found in the latter part of this work. It was dedicated to Colorado Charley and commented on by the press generally as one of the finest specimens of Western poetic sentiment ever published :

#### BURIAL OF WILD BILL.

[Written for the *N. Y. Clipper*.]

Under the sod in the prairie land  
We have laid him down to rest,  
With many a tear from the sad, rough throng,  
And the friends he loved the best ;  
And many a heartfelt sigh was heard  
As over the sward we trod,  
And many an eye was filled with tears  
As we covered him with the sod.

Under the sod in the prairie land  
We have laid the good and true—  
An honest heart and a noble scout  
Has bade us a last adieu.  
No more his silvery voice will ring,  
His spirit has gone to God ;  
Around his faults let charity cling,  
While we cover him with the sod.

Under the sod in the land of gold  
We have laid the fearless Bill ;  
We called him Wild, yet a little child  
Could bend his iron will.  
With generous heart he freely gave  
To the poorly clad, unshod—  
Think of it, pards—of his noble traits—  
While you cover him with the sod.

Under the sod in Deadwood Gulch  
You have laid his last remains ;  
No more his manly form will hail  
The Red Man on the plains.  
And, Charley, may Heaven bless you !  
You gave him a “bully good send ;”  
Bill was a friend to you, pard,  
And you were his last, best friend.

You buried him 'neath the old pine tree,  
In that little world of ours,  
His trusty rifle by his side—  
His grave all strewn with flowers ;  
His manly form in sweet repose,  
That lovely silken hair—  
I tell you, pard, it was a sight,  
That face so white and fair !

And while he sleeps beneath the sod  
His murderer goes free,  
Released by a perjured, gaming set  
Who'd murder you and me—  
Whose coward hearts dare never meet  
A brave man on the square.  
Well, pard, they'll find a warmer clime  
Than they ever found out there.

Hell is full of just such men ;  
And if Bill is above to-day,  
The Almighty will have enough to do  
To keep him from going away—  
That is, from making a little scout  
To the murderer's home below ;  
And if old Peter will let him out,  
He can clean out the ranche, I know.

---

## CHAPTER XIX.

JACK MCCALL left Deadwood on the day following his acquittal and went direct to Custer City. Within a short time after his appearance in that town, unable to restrain his braggadocio inclination, he told certain persons how he had killed Wild Bill, and boasted of the deed as a most commendable act. He was at once arrested by a Deputy U. S. Marshal, and at a preliminary hearing, Judge Blair decided to hold the prisoner and send him to Yankton for trial. C. W. Bramel appeared for the defendant in the first hearing, and Attorney-General Jenkins prosecuted. McCall was taken to Yankton, without delay, by Marshal Baleombe, and there held until the U. S. District Court sat in January following, when the prisoner was put upon trial. The witnesses for the prosecution nearly all appeared without special summons, as they were anxious to see a tardy justice done at last.

The trial continued but little more than one day, and as the testimony was a repetition of that elicited by the impromptu court at Deadwood, a verdict of guilty was returned almost without deliberation, and the Justice,

after a few days, passed sentence of death upon McCall, the time of his execution being fixed for March 1st, 1877.

Notwithstanding the deep-dyed villainy of Wild Bill's murderer, he still had some friends who exerted all the influence they could command to save him from the fate he so richly deserved. Petitions for respite and commutation of sentence were freely circulated, which, obtaining some signatures, were forwarded to the President, hoping to secure the Executive's interference; but they all failed.

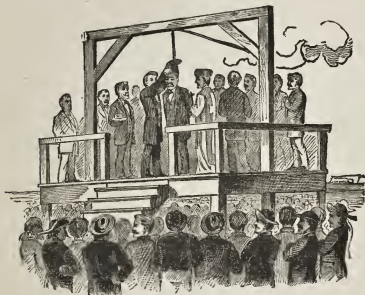
When the time for the execution arrived Yankton presented a very animated appearance, as people came from many miles around to witness the first official hanging in Dakota Territory.

Father Doxacher, a Catholic priest, visited the fated prisoner and administered spiritual nerve to fortify him for the scene about to be enacted. A scaffold having been erected on the open prairie about two miles north of Yankton, at nine o'clock on the morning of March 1st, the prisoner, priest and guards entered a closed carriage and drove to the place of execution. No time was wasted in preliminaries, as everything had been completed beforehand. McCall, getting out of the carriage, ascended the steps of the scaffold in company with the priest, and from the platform surveyed for a moment the upturned faces of the multitude before him, but uttered never a word. The priest, shrouded in robes of white, knelt with the prisoner on the scaffold and repeated the death litany while McCall engaged in earnest prayer, kissing the uplifted crucifix as he arose.

At twenty minutes past ten o'clock the black cap was adjusted over the head of the condemned man and as the marshal was fixing the noose about his neck, McCall requested him to "draw it tight, and make no mistake."



The next moment the trap was sprung and as the body shot downward McCall was heard to exclaim, "My God!" which were his last words. Throughout all this most dreadful experience McCall never exhibited the least trepidation, dying with that stolid indifference which he manifested when addressing the jury that tried him in the Deadwood court.



Execution of Jack McCall.

On the evening following the execution of McCall, U. S. Marshal Burdick received the following letter:

LOUISVILLE, KY., February 25th, 1877.

TO THE MARSHAL OF YANKTON.

DEAR SIR:—I saw in the morning papers a piece about the sentence of the murderer of Wild Bill, Jack McCall. There was a young man of the name of John McCall left here about six years ago, who has not been heard from for the last three years. He has a father, mother and three sisters living here in Louisville, who are very uneasy about him since they heard about the murder of Wild Bill. If you can send us any information about him we would be very thankful to you.

This John McCall is about twenty-five years old; has light hair, inclined to curl, and one eye crossed. I cannot say about his height as he was not grown when he left here. Please write as soon as convenient, as we are very anxious to hear from you.

Very respectfully,

MARY A. MCCALL.

This letter was from the sister of the man who had just paid the penalty of his crime, and with what feelings of sadness she received the marshal's reply can well be imagined.

One version of the origin of the difficulty which culminated in the assassination of Wild Bill has been given so repeatedly by correspondents that, as it requires but a few words to relate, it is here repeated.

Jack McCall, who was generally regarded as a gambling sharp by the people of Deadwood, challenged Bill to a game of poker. As the latter was particularly fond of this sport an immediate acceptance was the result. The game lasted for some hours, to Bill's great advantage, until McCall's money having become exhausted he overbet his hand. Bill in calling the bet discovered that McCall had only \$7.50 to make good his bet of \$10. He mildly remonstrated with him by saying: "You don't want to overbet your money; that's no way to play poker." McCall then admitted that he had not another cent, whereupon Bill gave him \$5.00 with which to pay his lodging and breakfast, and thus the two separated without a word indicative of harsh feelings. This version is generally accepted as furnishing the sole reason for the murder.

With regard to the killing of McCall's brother by Wild Bill in Hays City, as was claimed by McCall, the story is evidently without foundation. All the serious difficulties Bill had while at Hays City, or elsewhere,

have been faithfully recorded in the preceding pages, and unless Jack Strawhan was McCall's brother there cannot be even the remotest suspicion that the assassination was prompted by the motives claimed. In addition to this, McCall never made any attempt to prove that his brother had been killed by Wild Bill, nor does the letter of Mary A. McCall, the sister, intimate any reason for her brother's deed, as she certainly would have done had her brother fallen a victim to Wild Bill's vengeance.

---

## CHAPTER XX.

DEADWOOD improved so rapidly during the latter years of the seventies that it became necessary to remove the bodies which lay in the first grave-yard. Building after building had sprung up on the hill sides; the primitive forest fell before the axe of progress, and all natural beauties which originally surrounded Wild Bill's grave were torn away to give place for improvements.

On the third day of August, 1879, Charley Utter and Louis Shoenfield, old friends of Bill's, keeping ever green the memory of their departed comrade, having decided to give their precious dead a more fitting resting place, repaired to the grave and with heads uncovered, exhumed the remains of Wild Bill. Upon removing the coffin lid, assembled friends of the deceased were surprised to note the few changes that had taken place in the features. Save a very slightly discernible shrinkage of the jaws and eyes and a darker color of the skin, Wild Bill lay resting, after his three years' sleep, just as he was laid away. The same smile lingered on his lips, lighting up a countenance of such perfect repose that the

sleepers seemed moved by some pleasant dream. His rifle still lay beside him in thorough preservation, not even a speck of rust being perceptible on the polished barrel.

Upon lifting the remains from the grave, an extraordinary weight was detected, which was unexplainable until, in clipping off a lock of hair, Charley Utter's hand came in contact with the face of his dead friend, when a singular hardness of the flesh was felt. A closer examination then revealed the fact that, though the body retained a natural appearance, yet it was in process of petrification. At the time of death Wild Bill's weight was about one hundred and seventy-five pounds, but at the exhumation the body weighed nearly three hundred pounds.

After the remains were exposed for several hours to the gaze of numerous friends, they were conveyed to Mount Moriah Cemetery, where a lot and grave had been prepared by Charley Utter, and there given a second burial. A handsome Italian head-stone was also erected at the head of the grave by Mr. Utter, upon which the following inscription was engraved:

WILD BILL (J. B. Hickok),

Killed by the Assassin, Jack McCall, in Deadwood, August 2d, 1876. Pard, we will meet again in the Happy Hunting Grounds, to part no more. Good-bye.

COLORADO CHARLEY.

Here let the brave heart rest in the solitude of a frontier sepulcher; rest from the strife with which his life was so familiar; rest from the labors of a sturdy pioneer. The highway which he blazed by indomitable bravery and consecrated with the most sacred sacrifice he could give, is still followed by the advancing hosts of an expanding empire, dispelling primeval sounds and touch-

ing the virgin forests with the magic wand of a perfect civilization. The birds which carol their morning and evening concerts over his grave are drifting westward and will soon be seen no more, while in their stead will be heard the whir and hum of a busy life. The rough sounds and strife of a border settlement will give place to the sweet home melodies of cultured maidens, and coming generation, like repeating waves which wash out the footsteps from the beach, will destroy the landmarks



Wild Bill's Grave.

of the early settlers and point to Wild Bill's grave as the spot where sleeps a hero-pioneer; whose heart in life was gentle as a child's prayer, and yet brave as God could make it. An appreciation of the services which this noble scout rendered the builders of a Western empire belongs to those of unborn generations. "No man is appreciated until he is dead."

The following poem, another tribute of friendship

from Captain Jack Crawford, who delights in émbowering the memory of his dead comrade with the most fragrant of poetic garlands, will appropriately conclude this history of Wild Bill's death and burial :

### WILD BILL'S GRAVE.

[Written for the Virginia Evening Chronicle, August 4, 1877.]

BY HIS PARD, CAPTAIN JACK.

On the side of the hill between Whitewood and Deadwood,  
At the foot of a pine stump, there lies a lone grave,  
Environed with rocks, and with pine trees and redwood,  
Where the wild roses bloom over the breast of the brave.  
A mantle of brushwood the greensward encloses;  
The green boughs are waving far up overhead;  
While under the sod and the flow'rets reposes  
The brave and the dead.

Did I know him in life? Yes, as brother knows brother;  
I knew him and loved him—'twas all I could give,  
My love. But the fact is we loved one another,  
And either would die that the other might live.  
Rough in his ways? Yes, but kind and good-hearted;  
There wasn't a flaw in the heart of Wild Bill,  
And well I remember the day that he started  
That graveyard on top of the hill.

A good scout? I reckon there wasn't his equal,  
Both Fremont and Custer could vouch for that fact.  
Quick as chain-lightning with rifle or pistol—  
And Custer said, "*Bill never backed!*"  
He called me his "kid"—Buffalo Bill was his "boy"—  
And in fact he knew more than us both:  
And, though we have shared both in sorrow and joy,  
Nary an oath.

And now let me show you the good that was in him—  
The letters he wrote to his Agnes—his wife.  
Why, a look or a smile, one kind word could win him,  
Hear part of this letter—the last of this life:

"AGNES DARLING: If such should be that we never meet again, while firing my last shot I will gently breathe the name of my wife—my Agnes—and with a kind wish even for my enemies, I will make the plunge and try to swim to the other shore."

Oh, Charity! come fling your mantle about him,  
Judge him not harshly—he sleeps 'neath the sod;  
Custer, brave Custer! was lonely without him,  
Even with God.

Charge, comrades, charge! see young Custer ahead  
His charger leaps forth, almost flying.  
One volley! and half his comrades are dead—  
The other half fighting and dying!  
Let us hope while their dust is reposing beneath  
The dirge-singing pines in the mountains,  
That Christ has crowned each with an evergreen wreath  
And giv'n them to drink from his fountains.

In the foregoing chapters the writer has described, as he believes, every important adventure in Wild Bill's life; the commonplace incidents, however, have been omitted, such as inconsequential personal difficulties; long and tedious journeys; his career as a pony-express rider; overland trips to Salt Lake, and such other events as happen to nearly all men engaged in frontier service. His life was so full of daring acts that to record the ordinary incidents with the extraordinary adventures in which he participated would destroy the interest and impression the writer has sought to produce in this humble effort.

But before concluding this biography of the greatest scout and fighter, perhaps, of whose life history furnishes any authentic record, it is important to briefly describe Wild Bill in his social relations, removed from the influences which called for an exercise of his recklessly brave spirit.

Socially, among those of cultivated taste and refine-

ment, Wild Bill was very agreeable company, laying aside at once every uncouth habit and showing the innate gentlemanly qualities of which he was possessed. He had but few intimate friends, the most prominent of whom were W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), and Capt. Jack Crawford, whose lives ran in the same channels as his own; and Dr. Joshua Thorne and Capt. E. W. Kingsbury, both of Kansas City, among the limited number of his associates in the more peaceful walks of life.

Dr. Thorne was Bill's physician for many years and to him he confided his most sacred secrets; Kingsbury was a Captain in the Second U. S. Cavalry during the time that Bill was acting as guide for the regiment through the Indian campaigns, and it was in this service that they became very intimate. Wild Bill acted the part of an elder brother to Buffalo Bill and the two were so warmly attached that an insult would have been resented much more promptly by one when directed against the other than if pressed upon himself. Their relations were those of devoted comradeship and each was gladdened by praise bestowed upon the other. At times harsh words might pass between them, but each would submit to any language offered by the other without thinking of retaliation, while the slightest rebuke from anyone else would be sure to precipitate a row.

Wild Bill had no well defined religious belief, though his convictions, judging from assertions he had been heard to make to his best friends, were those of a Spiritualist. To Dr. Thorne he asserted that, when surrounded by imminent dangers, he was influenced by spiritual agencies who kept him cool while they disconcerted his enemies. It was to this influence he ascribed his presence of mind on the most trying occasions.

Another very singular characteristic Bill possessed was



that of excessive grief following all his fatal encounters. While never directly evading a fight, he always gave way to great sorrow for its consequences. Nearly all his victims were given proper burial at his expense, and Bill was the chief mourner at all the funerals when he had furnished the corpse. After his great fight at Rock Creek he learned that Jim McCandlas had left a widow with several children in destitute circumstances. From that time until Mrs. McCandlas' death he contributed to her support, sending remittances of money whenever he was in condition to do so.

Dr. Thorne informed the writer that he had removed eleven bullets from the body of Wild Bill, nearly all of which were shot into him at the Rock Creek fight, but that during all of the painful operations Bill gave expression to none other than sympathetic words for the ferocious enemies he had slain in that memorable encounter.

Though living the life of a bachelor within a few months of his death, Bill was nevertheless excessively fond of children, and so great was his influence among the smallest infants that he could pacify the most peevish ones better than a mother.

America has given birth to many a skillful marksman, but there can be no question that Wild Bill was the most expert pistol shot that this or any other country ever produced. To him this accomplishment was a gift of nature, which he greatly improved by years of persistent practice. Nearly all the leading magazines and newspapers have published elaborate articles descriptive of his marvelous accuracy and skill in the use of a pistol, but it is not inappropriate in this connection to recall some of the excellencies of his pistol practice.

On one occasion, during his residence in Kansas City,

he gave Dr. Thorne examples of his wonderful shooting. It was on a sultry Sabbath afternoon, when the two were sitting out in the side yard connected with the Doctor's residence engaged in desultory conversation. A flock of chickens were strolling about the place, among the number being a large rooster whose propensity was for chasing every other gallinaceous male off the place. Dr. Thorne having informed Bill of the troublesome qualities of the fowl, expressed a wish that, as it was too old to eat, some one would kill it out of compassion for the other male chanticleers. Thereupon Wild Bill remarked :

"I'll bet you five dollars, Doctor, that I can cut the rooster's throat with my derringer, at thirty paces, without breaking his neck or touching the head or body."

"You can't do it," responded the Doctor, "and I'll take the bet." The chicken was chased to the required distance, and while it was still walking Bill raised his pistol and fired, without even bringing the weapon to his eye. The rooster ran a short distance and then dropped and fluttered about until it died. Upon examination it was found that the chicken's throat and windpipe had been cut with the same cleverness as if a knife had been used, while its neck was evidently not touched.

This shot, surely as perfect as could be made, so astonished the Doctor that he claimed it was an accident. Bill then, to convince him that it was not, fired several times from the two cartridge derringers he carried, first at small objects and then at sparrows in the trees ; each shot went directly to the mark, not a single miss being made. The Doctor was satisfied.

Among the great number of fancy shots Bill was accustomed to make in amusing his friends, was one driving the cork through the neck of a bottle and knocking the bottom out without breaking the neck. This shot was also performed at a distance of thirty paces.

For a lucrative pastime, at which he won no inconsiderable amount of money, Bill would get up a shooting match and then take bets of from one to ten dollars that he could shoot a hole through a silver dime at a distance of fifty paces. This seemed so utterly impossible that there was but little difficulty in getting a number of such bets, until he demonstrated his ability to perform the act nine times out of ten. Of course, at such a distance, it is almost impossible to see so small an object as a silver dime, but this difficulty was readily overcome by placing the money in such a position that the sun's rays would be gathered on its surface, thus presenting a brilliant spot for a target.

In rifle shooting Bill was also an adept, but at short spaces he was much more dextrous with the pistol. In using the former weapon he took deliberate aim, while with the later he fired at seeming random, the bullet, apparently, going straight to the mark of its own volition.

In the early part of 1864, during his service as a scout under Gen. Daviess, as has already been related in chapter V, Wild Bill came into possession of a beautiful young mare to which he gave the name "Black Nell." This animal was a filly with a pedigree which it is to be regretted Bill never learned, as she was captured in a fight with three bushwhackers, but her exquisite beauty furnished a true index of her lofty descent. She was black as a raven and full of spirit; her neck arched with the grace of a rainbow; her eye was soft and clear as a virgin's, and her limbs were as symmetrical as those of the trinity of graces. During all his leisure, Bill gave attention to the care and training of this animal until at length she became the wonder of all who witnessed the performances through which he so frequently put her.

He first trained the mare to obey his commands given by whistles; to everyone except Bill she appeared fierce and unmanageable, but to him she was the very soul of sagacity and docility. Whether grazing, feeding at the trough, or lying down, Bill had only to blow a single whistle and she would come running to him with the eagerness of a dog anxious to greet his master. A snap of his fingers would send her galloping away, but the whistle would always cause her immediate return.

Another trick Bill taught his beautiful mare afterward proved the means of saving his life. Riding her at the swiftest speed he had only to drop his hand so that the mare could see the act, and instantly she would stop and prostrate herself on the ground, remaining in that position until she was bidden to rise again. On the occasion referred to, where this trick saved his life, Bill was riding through the northern part of Greene county, Mo., on a scouting tour. While passing through the tall prairie grass he was pursued by a body of bushwhackers. After fleeing before them for several miles he crossed a low piece of ground which temporarily hid him from the sight of his enemies. In this place Bill made a turn and moving his hand before Black Nell she instantly dropped down and remained perfectly quiet while the pursuing party rode by within fifty yards without discovering him.

During a visit of Wild Bill to Springfield, Mo., in 1867, meeting with many old friends, he became decidedly convivial under the influences usually indulged in that town. He had his famous mare with him, and after explaining her good qualities and sense, offered to wager treats for the crowd that he could make Black Nell leap onto a billiard table and from that perch drink a quart of whisky. Some one accepted the bet, chiefly because they desired to see the act performed. Bill at once removed

the bridle and saddle from Nell, and going into a saloon which contained an old billiard table, told the mare to follow him. Nell, obedient as a poodle, walked so closely behind her master that her nose rested on his shoulder. Approaching the billiard table, he bade the mare mount. Nell at once reared up and deposited her forelegs on the table, but it was only after a long and persistent effort that she could raise her hind feet so high; in fact the strain came near disabling her for life; but she accomplished the feat, and then drank the whisky with as much relish as her master ever exhibited.

This wonderful mare, famous among the most celebrated horses of America, died near Kansas City in 1869. Wild Bill manifested the most poignant grief at the loss of his sagacious friend and buried her with appropriate funeral ceremonies, and afterward made many pilgrimages to her grave.

---

Having now discharged my duties as biographer of Wild Bill, and given to him the character of a brave, honest and true man, worthy a position in the annals of American frontier history, lest the reader should ascribe to me undue admiration for the man whom I have sought to justly heroize, I will close this history with two published opinions of men capable of judging his true character. The first, as here given, is from a writer in *Scribner's Magazine* for October, 1876:

“ \* \* \* I had been in town only a few moments when I met Charley Utter, better known in the West as ‘Colorado Charley,’ to whom I had a letter of introduction, and who at once invited me to share his camp while I remained in the region.

“On our way to his tent, we met J. B. Hickok, ‘Wild Bill,’ the hero of a hundred battles. Bill was Utter’s ‘pardner,’ and I was introduced at once. Of course I had heard of him, the greatest scout in the West, but I was not prepared to find such a man as he proved to be.

“Most of the Western scouts do not amount to much. They do a great deal in the personal reminiscence way, but otherwise they are generally of the class described as ‘frauds.’ In Wild Bill I found a man who talked little and had done a great deal. He was about six feet two inches in height, and very powerfully built; his face was intelligent; his hair blonde, and falling in long ringlets upon his broad shoulders; his eyes, blue and pleasant, looked one straight in the face when he talked; and his lips, thin and compressed, were only partly hidden by a straw-colored moustache. His costume was a curiously blended union of the habiliments of the borderman and the drapery of the fashionable dandy. Beneath the skirts of his elaborately embroidered buckskin coat gleamed the handles of two silver-mounted revolvers, which were his constant companions. His voice was low and musical, but through its hesitation I could catch a ring of self-reliance and consciousness of strength. Yet he was the most courteous man I had met on the plains. On the following day I asked to see him use a pistol, and he assented. At his request I tossed a tomato can about fifteen feet into the air, both his pistols being in his belt when it left my hand. He drew one of them and fired two bullets through the tin can before it struck the ground. Then he followed it along, firing as he went, until both weapons were empty. You have heard the expression ‘quick as lightning.’ Well, that will describe Wild Bill. He was noted all over the country for rapidity of motion, courage and certainty of aim. Wherever

he went he controlled the people around him, and many a quarrel has been settled by his simple announcement, 'This has gone far enough.' Early in the forenoon of my third day in Deadwood word was brought over to camp that he had been killed."

The following is extracted from Gen. G. A. Custer's "Life on the Plains." Wild Bill was for a long time engaged as scout for Gen. Custer, accompanying him in several important campaigns against the Indians, and was repeatedly specially mentioned in the army reports for gallantry:

"Among the white scouts were numbered some of the most noted of their class. The most prominent man among them was Wild Bill, whose highly varied career was made the subject of an illustrated sketch in one of the popular monthly periodicals a few years ago. Wild Bill was a strange character, just the one which a novelist might gloat over. He was a plainsman in every sense of the word, yet unlike any other of his class. In person he was about six feet one in height, straight as the straightest of the warriors whose implacable foe he was; broad shoulders, well-formed chest and limbs, and a face strikingly handsome; a sharp, clear, blue eye, which stared you straight in the face when in conversation; a finely-shaped nose, inclined to be aquiline; a well-turned mouth, with lips only partially concealed by a handsome moustache. His hair and complexion were those of a perfect blonde. The former was worn in uncut ringlets, falling carelessly over his powerfully formed shoulders. Add to this figure a costume blending the immaculate neatness of the dandy with the extravagant taste and style of the frontiersman, and you have Wild Bill, then as now the most famous scout on the plains.

"Whether on foot or on horseback, he was one of the

most perfect types of physical manhood I ever saw. Of his courage there could be no question; it had been brought to the test on too many occasions to admit of a doubt. His skill in the use of the rifle and pistol was unerring; while his deportment was exactly the opposite of what might be expected from a man of his surroundings. It was entirely free from all bluster or bravado. He never spoke of himself unless requested to do so. His conversation, strange to say, never bordered either on the vulgar or blasphemous. His influence among the frontiersmen was unbounded, his word was law; and many are the personal quarrels and disturbances which he has checked among his comrades by his simple announcement that 'this has gone far enough,' if need be followed by the ominous warning that when persisted in or renewed the quarreler 'must settle it with me.' Wild Bill is anything but a quarrelsome man; yet no one but himself can enumerate the many conflicts in which he has been engaged, and which have almost invariably resulted in the death of his adversary. I have a personal knowledge of at least half a dozen men whom he has at various times killed, one of these being at the time a member of my command. Others have been severely wounded, yet he always escaped unhurt. On the plains every man openly carries his belt with its invariable appendages, knife and revolver, often two of the latter. Wild Bill always carried two handsome ivory-handled revolvers of the large size; he was never seen without them. Where this is the common custom, brawls or personal difficulties are seldom if ever settled by blows. The quarrel is not from a word to a blow, but from a word to the revolver, and he who can draw and fire first is the best man. No civil law reaches him; none is applied for. In fact there is no law recognized beyond the frontier



but that of 'might makes right.' Should death result from the quarrel, as it usually does, no coroner's jury is impaneled to learn the cause of death, and the survivor is not arrested. But instead of these old-fashioned proceedings, a meeting of citizens takes place, the survivor is *requested* to be present when the circumstances of the homicide are inquired into, and the unfailing verdict of 'justifiable,' 'self-defence,' etc., is pronounced, and the law stands vindicated. That justice is often deprived of a victim there is not a doubt. Yet in all of the many affairs of this kind in which Wild Bill has performed a part, and which have come to my knowledge, there is not a single instance in which the verdict of twelve fair-minded men would not be pronounced in his favor.

"That the even tenor of his way continues to be disturbed by little events of this description may be inferred from an item which has been floating lately through the columns of the press, and which states that 'the funeral of "Jim Bludso," who was killed the other day by Wild Bill, took place to-day.' It then adds: 'The funeral expenses were borne by Wild Bill!' What could be more thoughtful than this? Not only to send a fellow mortal out of the world, but to pay the expenses of the transit!"



Gen. Forsythe and His Belcaguered Scouts. (See page 312.)





HON. WM. F. CODY.  
(Buffalo Bill.)

# LIFE OF BUFFALO BILL.

(HON. WILLIAM F. CODY.)

RELATING THE ADVENTURES AND INCIDENTS IN THE CAREER OF THE MOST FAMOUS OF LIVING PLAINSMEN.

COMPRISING DESCRIPTIONS OF HIS DESPERATE ENCOUNTERS, NARROW ESCAPES, INDIAN BATTLES, WONDERFUL RIDES, GREAT HUNTS, AND CONQUESTS ON AND OFF THE MIMIC STAGE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

THE peculiarities of American civilization are seen to great advantage in the anomalous character of Hon. WILLIAM FREDERICK CODY, known throughout the English speaking world as Buffalo Bill. He is the very embodiment of diversity, and a representative type of the antipodal phases of society; on the plains and in camp he becomes the essence of pioneer hardihood, inured to privation, and the exponent of song and story; while in the *salons* of the aristocracy he is none the less a kid-gloved society gallant, versed in all the subtleties of polished etiquette, full of vivacity and courtly witticisms. In short, there is no nature so readily conformable to all the ways of life as his, and under all circumstances there is always a sparkling effervescence of spirit about him which can only find comparison in a newly opened bottle of extra-dry champagne. These unexampled traits of character will be distinctly evidenced in the following history of his singular life and adventures.

Buffalo Bill was born in a pioneer settlement of Scott County, Iowa, on the 26th day of February, 1845. His father, whose name was Isaac, was one of the original surveyors of Davenport, and a man of strong individuality, possessing considerable ability and the elements of leadership. Opportunities, however, being few, Mr. Cody had to adapt himself to the pursuits offered, and for two or three years he drove a stage coach between Chicago and Davenport.

In 1849 Mr. Cody was influenced by the wonderful stories regarding the gold discoveries in California to make provisions for the great overland journey, but after starting, others who were to accompany him, abandoned the enterprise and persuaded him to follow their example. During his residence in Iowa he held the position of Justice of the Peace, and also served one term in the Legislature, but having a disposition for adventure and delighting in pioneer life, he removed to Kansas in 1852, settling his family at Weston, Missouri, on the farm of his brother Elijah, and then established a trading post in the northern part of Leavenworth County, Kansas, at Salt Creek Valley, near the Kickapoo Agency.

At this time Kansas was occupied by numerous tribes of Indians, who were settled on reservations, and through the territory ran the great highway to California and Salt Lake City. In addition to the thousands of gold seekers who were passing through Kansas by way of Ft. Leavenworth, there were as many more Mormons in their hegira from Illinois to found a new temple in which to propagate their doctrines. This extensive travel made the business of trade on the route a most profitable one. But with the caravans were those fractious elements of adventurous pioneering, and here little Billy, as Buffalo Bill was then called, first saw the typical Westerner;

with white sombrero, buckskin clothes, long hair, moccasined feet and a belt full of murderous bowies and long pistols. But instead of these *outré* peculiarities impressing Billy with feelings of trepidation, they inspired him with an ambition to become a daring plainsman. The rare and skillful feats of horsemanship which he daily witnessed bred in him a desire to excel the most expert; and when, at seven years of age, his father gave him a pony, the full measure of his happiness had ripened, like Jonah's gourd, in a night. Thenceforth his occupation was horseback riding, in which pleasurable employment he made himself very useful in performing necessary journeys in his father's interest.

Living so near the Kickapoo Indians, Billy soon became well acquainted with them, and as they were very friendly, he, with boyish curiosity, became a constant companion of some young bucks of the tribe; in this association he participated in their sports and learned to shoot with bow and arrow, throw the lance, and converse in their native tongue—all of which accomplishments became very useful to him in after life.

In anticipation of the early passage of what was known as the "Enabling Act of Kansas Territory," which was then pending before Congress, Mr. Cody, in the fall of 1853, took his family from the farm of his brother and settled them at the post in Kansas, where he at once set about erecting suitable log buildings. In the succeeding winter the act was passed, which opened up the territory for settlement, and Mr. Cody immediately pre-empted the claim on which he was living.

Every reader of American history is familiar with the disorders which followed close upon the heels of the "Enabling Act." Pending its passage the Western boundary of Missouri was ablaze with the camp fires of

intending settlers. Thousands of families were sheltered under the canvas of their ox wagons, impatiently awaiting the signal from the Nation announcing the opening of the territorial doors to the brawny immigrants, and when the news was heralded the waiting host poured over the boundary line and fairly deluged the new public domain.

In this rapid settlement of the territory a most perplexing question arose, which was contested with such virulence that a warfare was inaugurated which became a stain upon the nation's escutcheon, and was not abated until the Missouri and Kansas borders became drunk with blood. Nearly all those who came from Missouri were intent upon extending slavery into the new territory, whilst those who emigrated from Illinois, Iowa and Indiana and sought homes in the new domain were equally determined that the cursed hydra head of slavery should never be reared in their midst. Over this question the border warfare began, and its fierceness can only find comparison in the Inquisitorial persecutions of the fifteenth century. Men were shot down in their homes, around their firesides, in the furrows behind the plow,—everywhere. Widows and orphans multiplied, the arm of industry was palsied, while the incendiary torch lit up the prairie heavens, feeding on blighted homes and trailing along in the path of granaries and store-houses. Mobs of murder-loving men, drunk with fury, and with hearts set on desolation, day and night descended upon unguarded households, and tearing away husbands and brothers from the loving arms of wives and sisters, left their bodies dangling from the shade trees of their unhappy homes, or shot them down where their blood might sear the eyes of helpless, agonized relatives. Anguish sat on every threshold, pity had no abiding-place, and for four



years the besom of destruction, with all its pestilential influences, blighted the prairie and rendered every heart on the border sad and despondent.

In this war of vengeance the Cody family did not escape a full measure of affliction. Near Mr. Cody's trading post was another store, kept by a Missourian named Rively, around which a considerable settlement had been made, which became the rendezvous of many different elements, and particularly of pro-slavery men, who enjoyed Rively's sympathies. In the summer of 1854, and within a few months after the "Enabling Act" was passed, a very large meeting was held at the popular rendezvous, and Mr. Cody being present was pressed to address the crowd on the slavery question, he being regarded as favorably disposed to making Kansas a slave territory, owing to the fact that his brother, Elijah, was a Missourian. In the course of his remarks he frankly admitted that his views were opposed to those of his audience, but nevertheless expressed his opinions in a most conservative manner, in order that no offence might be given. Notwithstanding the guarded manner of his speech, the crowd became very angry and manifested their feelings by calling him a "black Abolitionist," and ordering him to "get down off the box." In trying to assuage their anger he only aggravated them the more, and before he fully comprehended the danger of his position a rough desperado, who had been employed as a farm hand by Elijah Cody, leaped onto the box with a drawn bowie knife and stabbed the speaker twice in the breast. The wounded man fell off the box and was carried to Mr. Rively's house, from whence he was conveyed in a carriage to the residence of his brother, where his wounds were dressed, which, though not directly fatal, were indirectly the cause of his death a short time after.

The unfortunate speech of Mr. Cody at Rively's store proved to be only the beginning of misfortunes to the family. Being the first man whose blood was shed in opposition to the extension of slavery in Kansas, the border Missourians marked him as an object for their special hatred.



Stabbing of Buffalo Bill's Father.

It was several weeks after receiving his wound before Mr. Cody was able to leave his bed, and when he returned to his trading post he received notice to quit the territory immediately or abide the consequences which an enraged mob threatened. Disregarding these warnings, his house was surrounded by a body of armed mounted men on a dark night shortly after, whose purpose it was to summarily hang him, and after consummating this foul deed

burn the house that sheltered his large family. Fortunately the plan was discovered, and to effect an escape he had recourse to the following stratagem: The night being very dark, Mr. Cody quietly arose and clothed himself in his wife's dress and bonnet, in which very effective disguise he easily passed between the horsemen and gained an adjoining cornfield, where he concealed himself. The mob dismounted, and after inquiry and a critical search of the premises, discovered that Mr. Cody was absent—a fact that the would-be murderers were at a loss to understand. But that their visit might not be wholly without some villainy, the mob robbed the premises of everything they could find possessing any value, and then drove off all the horses in the pasture and stables.

Mr. Cody, after keeping concealed for three days, succeeded in reaching Ft. Leavenworth, near which place soon afterward he joined a party of Free State men under Jim Lane, and was a participant in the fight at Hickory Point, where the Free State men gained a decided victory, but not without considerable loss.

After serving with Lane in one campaign, Mr. Cody returned to his family clandestinely, and acquainting them with his purpose went to Grasshopper Falls, where he at once began the erection of a saw-mill. The proslavery men were still determined to kill him, and upon learning of his settlement at the Falls, immediately resolved themselves again into a body of intentional murderers. By a lucky chance, one of the hired men in Mr. Cody's homestead overheard the threats of the mob and lost no time in conveying his information to Mrs. Cody. With true wifely devotion, she considered only the safety of her husband. Billy, her oldest boy, now nine years of age, was her reliance, and to him, with trembling heart, she quickly said:

“Billy, my dear boy, hitch up Prince (the pony) immediately, and ride with all your might to your father; the mob have again organized to murder him, and you must reach him before they do, to warn him of his danger.”

There were great big tears in her eyes when she gave this injunction; a husband's safety was in the balance on one side and the life of her little boy on the other; it was the hour for sacrifice, and brave little Billy, filled with resolution, threw fear under his pony's feet and a moment after was dashing away toward Grasshopper Falls. Seven miles from the post he suddenly approached a body of armed men, by whom he was immediately recognized and commanded to halt. The boy, so young in years, comprehended the situation and instead of obeying the order, only quickened the pace of his pony, making a detour on the prairie, hotly pursued by the mob; but he was riding to save the life of a loving father, and could not afford to be captured. After a chase of a few miles the mob drew rein and permitted the boy to ride so far ahead of them that when they reached Grasshopper Falls Mr. Cody and his brave boy were enroute for Lawrence to join Jim Lane again. At this time Lawrence was the territorial capital and the famous Lecompton Legislature was being organized, of which body Mr. Cody was chosen a member.

After the first session of the Legislature he was called to Ohio in the interest of the Free State advocates, where he remained during a period of several months. After the departure of his father Billy, with three companions, returned to Grasshopper Falls; but while enroute they were ambushed by a party of renegades and one of his companions killed, while Billy himself escaped only through good luck and a fleet horse.

Upon meeting his mother, whom he had not seen since leaving home to warn his father of the mob's intentions, he handed her a letter from Mr. Cody, which fully relieved her mind from the dreadful anxiety she had so long suffered ; overcome with joy, she fell upon the neck of her brave boy and could only manifest her thankfulness with bounteous tears.

During Mr. Cody's absence his family was subjected almost daily to some outrage ; gangs of cut-throats were almost constantly hovering about the premises trying to surprise Mr. Cody and kill him, or steal his stock and provisions. But amid all this threatening condition of affairs, and despite the persuasions of Elijah Cody, who offered her a home with his family in Missouri, Mrs. Cody was determined to remain at the home place and endure whatever persecutions the pro-slavery men could inflict. She was a woman of unusual bravery, well suited for a pioneer's wife, and yet a lady well educated and used to the refinements of the most cultured society.

After Mr. Cody's return from Ohio he served his term in the Lecompton Legislature and then resumed his labors at Grasshopper Falls. But the wound he received at the meeting near Rively's store had never healed and continued to give him so much trouble that he was forced to his bed again. While lying in this helpless condition one of the neighbors, a violent pro-slavery man of the lowest and most despicable proclivities, stole Billy's favorite little pony, Prince, and a few days afterward he again visited the unfortunate family expressing a determination to kill Mr. Cody, who was confined to his bed in the upper story of the house. The murderous wretch, however, was in such a maudlin condition from the deep potations in which he had indulged, that after ordering Mrs. Cody and her daughters to get him some dinner, he

forgot the purpose of his visit and rode off again. It was fortunate for him that he made no attempt on the life of Mr. Cody, as Billy had overheard his threats, and with heroic resolve had taken a station at the head of the stairs, with pistol in hand, determined to shoot the intruder the moment his head appeared above the second story floor.

In the spring of 1856 an attempt was made by the old mob to blow up the Cody residence, to accomplish which purpose two kegs of powder were secretly deposited in the cellar, with a long fuse attached, but the villains were foiled by the bravery of Mrs. Cody and her heroic little boy, who managed to bluff the crowd that came to the house to light the fuse, by declaring that the house was full of armed men who would fire on the intruders if they did not immediately abandon the premises.

It was this life of constant peril that Buffalo Bill led through the years of his youth, which was almost literally a baptism of blood and persecution; from the *boccario* he developed into the cavallard driver, and from this latter occupation he speedily became a recognized leader in the most thrilling adventures.

---

## CHAPTER II.

IN the summer of 1855, when ten years of age, Billy became a herder—or cow-boy—for Mr. Russell, to accept which position he ran away from home, returning again at the expiration of two months with the sum of fifty dollars, all in new silver coins, which he gave to his mother who needed his assistance now, since Mr. Cody

was still suffering from his wound and unable to continue his labors.

The settlement about the Kickapoo Agency having increased rapidly, in 1856 a log school house was built and an excellent teacher employed, by subscription, to give instruction to the youth of that immediate section. Although this was the first regular school in the district, Billy had been under the instruction of a Miss Lyons, who was engaged by Mr. Cody to come to his house and teach the children, of whom there were seven, five girls and two boys, so that he was considerably advanced, for a pioneer boy, when he was enrolled as a pupil of one of the first schools started in the territory.

For some time Billy made excellent progress; was esteemed a model scholar and in every respect won the favor of teacher and fellow pupils. But his troubles began right where he expected to find happiness, thus, for once, following the usual plot of love stories. Mary Hyatt, a flaxen-haired, pretty little miss, with roguish smile and cunning eyes, was also a pupil in the log school-house and sat on a seat so near Billy that she became his dear charmer and condensed all his ambitions in the one desire to gain a reciprocal feeling. By his own admissions he became almost hopelessly stricken, the arrow of love cleaving the right ventricle of his heart clean through. The school-house was located on the bank of a creek where the woods grew luxuriantly, and afforded sylvan retreats for young lovers to build bowers of foliage and flowers. Billy, ever regardful for the happiness of Mary, with dextrous hands built arbors to shelter his young love, just large enough to hold two, the reserve space being, of course, intended for himself. But Billy was not without competition, his rival being a larger and older boy named Stephen Gobel. The latter,

instead of resorting to honorable means for winning Mary, by trying to build a more delightful retreat for his sweetheart, ruthlessly tore down the arbors constructed by Billy and defied the school-mate he had wronged. A fight was the consequence, in which adverse fortune attended Billy, for he was compelled to acknowledge his defeat, which fact coming to the notice of the teacher, both combatants were brought under pedagogical discipline. The course of poor Billy's love was, therefore, undisputably rough, but though his spirit was humiliated, his affection remained none the less strong. Like the spider that, with industrious will, rebuilds again and again the web destroyed by vengeful circumstance, so Billy returned to the wreck of his little bower and carefully reconstructed the arch with greener twigs and fresher flowers. But again the domineering Stephen destroyed the romantic little shelter and thus precipitated another fight. In this second encounter the ruthless boy again humbled his rival, but by chance Billy thought of a small dagger he carried, and during the fight it fell out of the scabbard convenient to his hand. With this he contested successfully by thrusting its keen point into Stephen's hip, bringing a copious flow of blood. The wounded boy cried out, "I'm killed! I'm killed," with such piteous voice that the scholars ran to inform the teacher, while Billy, frightened at what he had almost unconsciously done, ran off with all possible speed, closely pursued by the teacher, but not closely enough to be caught. He continued his flight until he overtook a freight team driven by an acquaintance named John Willis, to whom he hastily related the cause of his hurry, not forgetting, of course, to justify the act he had committed.

"Well," responded Willis, "you served him right; get up into the wagon and go with me to Ft. Kearney;



the trip will take forty days and I want you for a eaval-lard driver."

This proposition suited Billy, for his adventurous spirit caused him to long continually for an engagement that would take him over the plains among the buffaloes and eoyotes; but he could not go without first seeing his mother, to whom he was most ardently attached. Willis therefore consented to camp and go baek with him at night to see his mother and endeavor to gain her permission.

Mrs. Cody had already heard of the trouble in which Billy had become involved, but, like her boy, she did not know the extent of Gobel's injuries, imagining them to be greater than they were. After much reflection and an expression of poignant regret, Mrs. Cody at last gave her consent to Willis' proposition, and with tears streaming down her cheeks bade her little boy good-bye, not neglecting to implore him to be a good boy, and ever keep in mind the lesson he was now learning: that all wrong was sure to entail punishment.

It so happened that Gobel's wound consisted of a very slight cut, which, having drawn blood, was sufficient to excite grave fears in the wounded lad. But Billy felt that he had committed a terrible crime and very naturally wanted to get out of the country to escape the fury of Gobel's father, who, he rightly suspected, would follow him.

On the following day, while Billy was sitting beside Willis on the wagon, en route for Kearney, he discovered old man Gobel, accompanied by two others, who had got onto the trail and were after him. Adopting Willis' suggestion, Billy got down into the wagon-bed and hid himself securely among the freight, leaving his friend to represent him. Willis was a plucky fellow, and being

well armed he bluffed the pursuing party and carried Billy through safely.

This incident was perhaps the turning point in William Cody's life, for it proved to be the initiatory ceremony which conferred on him the first degree as a Knight of the Prairie, and caused him to adopt the wild, romantic life he has ever since led.

After completing the journey to Kearney, Billy entered the employ of Russell, Majors & Waddell again as a cow-boy, which employment he followed for several months. Having become somewhat emboldened by the length of his absence he at last returned home, where he was rejoiced to find his own and the Gobel family on excellent terms of friendship, and Stephen ready to extend the palm of forgiveness.

In the winter of 1856-57 Mr. Cody had so far recovered that he was again able to leave his bed and travel, and in company with another Free-State man named Boles, went to Cleveland to bring out a colony to Kansas, which he accomplished, settling the new emigrants near Grasshopper Falls. But directly after his return a severe cold, contracted during the journey, aggravated his old wound and in the April following he died, leaving a large family illy provided for, with Billy, who was now twelve years of age, the main support.

With a heroism which has blossomed like the everlasting flower throughout his life, the young plainsman shouldered the burden that had thus fallen upon him, and one month after his father's death he sought and found employment with the great freighters Russell, Majors & Waddell, and departed with his mother's blessings. He was assigned to duty under Frank and William McCarthy, brothers, who were engaged to drive a large herd of beef cattle to Salt Lake City, which were to

serve as food for Gen. Albert Sidney Johnson's army, then operating against the Mormons.

To appreciate the dangers which such a journey invited at that date of Western settlement it is only necessary for the reader to know the fact that in addition to the occupation of the country by Mormons, hundreds of different warlike tribes of Indians infested every ravine and mountain pass, many of these pests of the great West being employed by the Mormons to massacre overland freighters and emigrants. It therefore required eternal vigilance upon the part of travelers to prevent themselves from falling into hands as unmerciful as the iniquitous inquisitors. Men of iron nerve and desperate pluck were the only ones who attempted the perilous journey, and even these never departed from their border homes without taking a melancholy farewell of their kith and kin. Little Billy, by which familiar and no less euphonious appellation the youthful Buffalo Bill was universally known until after he became of age, was the only boy up to that time that had ever been permitted to accompany a team across the plains, as an assistant, but though fully apprised of the dangers of such a trip, he ran up the black feather and shouldering a Mississippi Yager manifested the greatest pride in being accepted as one of the volunteers for such a hazardous undertaking. He sought danger for the spice it afforded.

The company, comprising cooks, drivers, herders, etc., numbering twelve persons, proceeded, with three hundred head of cattle, as far West as the South Platte, beyond old Ft. Kearney, before they met with any incident of note. Stopping at this point in the evening, to go into camp, they met with a surprise which came near ending in the annihilation of the party. Billy was busy-ing himself carrying wood preparatory to cooking sup-

per, while three of the herders were rounding up the cattle in the corral; the others were distributed around the camping place preparing the tents and getting things ready for the night. Suddenly, yelling and shooting was heard out where the herders were, and with the first volley three men were killed, having been taken by complete surprise by a band of fifty Indians. The men in camp gathered their arms instantly, just in time to meet the charging Indians as they came pell-mell over the hill directly for the wagons, yelling all the while like infuriated demons. Billy was quick in comprehending the situation, and though his heart may have become more violent in its pulsations, he never stopped to pray or ask advice; but gathering his gun in common with the others got behind the wagons and began pouring swift lead into the Indians. This prompt action, resulting as it did in the death of several braves, served to repel the charge. The Indians, however, soon rallied, and flanking on both sides came back in a rainbow movement, which promised greater success. The McCarthy boys, appreciating the danger of their position, ordered the men to break for Plum Creek, the banks of which could be used as a protection and breastwork. In this retreat one of the party was shot in the leg, the wound being so severe that his companions had to carry him to prevent him from falling into the hands of the red demons.

Reaching Plum Creek, which was only fifty yards from the place of encampment, the men tried to check the Indians, but their movements were anticipated and in order to prevent being entirely cut off, the McCarthys advised a retreat down the stream toward Ft. Kearney. The wounded man was placed on a log fortunately found at the water's edge and allowed to drift with the current, which chanced to be rapid by reason of recent rains.

The men, by excellent markmanship, kept the Indians at a distance, and thus the march continued for about twenty miles, until they reached a junction of the creek with the North Platte. But keeping close to the bank, the party continued on down the stream throughout the night.

Billy, being so young, became very much exhausted by so long a march, carrying a large gun, and permitted the others to get nearly a hundred yards in advance. The night, now approaching morning, was made beautiful by a bright full moon, and in closely watching the banks Billy's quick eye fell upon the decorated head-dress of a big Indian as he was peering over the bank looking for a favorable shot. Quick as thought, without challenging the enemy or shouting to his companions for help, the brave boy raised his gun and fired. There was no cause for conjecture regarding the effect of his aim, for with a leap like the stricken deer, head-dress and Indian came tumbling down the embankment, rolling over and over in the descent, and fell dead at Billy's feet. To say that the youthful Indian slayer was surprised affords no conception of his feelings; he was frightened with astonishment and when his companions rushed back to determine the cause of the shooting, they found Billy standing beside his victim with looks indicative of victor and vanquished, too puzzled at first to explain his act; but the dead Indian was explanation sufficient and Billy was at once complimented with such generous enthusiasm that he soon realized what a heroic deed he had accomplished. After the loss of their inquisitive companion the Indians drew off and left Billy and his party to pursue the remainder of their journey unmolested.

It was long after the first morning hours when the footsore party reached Kearney, but upon arriving at the fort Frank McCarthy made due report of the Indian at-

tack, not forgetting to elaborately describe the bravery of Billy and how scientifically the lion-hearted lad had slain the "biggest Indian in the outfit."

A company was at once mounted on mules and sent out from the fort, taking a howitzer with them, to recover the cattle and if possible punish the dusky marauders. Billy was allowed to accompany the soldiers, as his capabilities were now reckoned at more than par. This force, upon reaching the scene of attack, found the mutilated remains of the three herders, to which they gave proper burial and then pushed on in pursuit of the Indians, but the trail was lost in crossing Republican river, and further efforts of the company were directed to recovering the cattle. But even this object of the expedition had to be abandoned, as it was found that the cattle not driven off by the Indians had been stampeded with buffaloes, thus rendering their recapture impossible.

The first expedition, therefore, in which Billy had been engaged terminated disastrously, but it brought to him a full measure of adventure and notoriety. The fame so soon won had preceded him in his return, so that when he arrived in Leavenworth, on his way home, there was an enterprising reporter awaiting to interview him. Billy, though by no means vainglorious, told the story of his adventure with much satisfaction, and on the following day he found the substance of his relation under a bewildering, pyrotechnical display of sensational head lines, in which he was heroized with a veneering of eulogistic expressions impossible of analysis. In the language of Buffalo Bill, this incident has been attached to his name like a tin kettle to a dog's tail, and ever since he has been pursuing life with this appendage clattering at his heels. Many men, however, have been made famous by circumstances much less interesting and meritorious.

## CHAPTER III.

BILLY did not remain at home long before another opportunity was offered him to cross the plains. With most boys a trip replete with experiences such as he had encountered at Plum Creek would have satisfied their craving for further adventure in that direction, but to him the effect was to increase his longing for the plains, to share the perils, hardships and life of danger-loving prairie free-rovers.

The opportunity referred to came in an offer made him by a wagon boss named Lew Simpson, who was in the employ of Russell, Majors & Waddell, to accompany a freight train to Salt Lake as an "extra."

Mrs. Cody was decidedly averse to her boy making another trip over a route she was now convinced led through the greatest dangers, and when Simpson begged hard for Billy, pledging to return him in safety, she positively refused. No one can fail to appreciate this poor mother's decision; she saw in the proposed trip a certain absence of nearly one year even should no evil attend her promising son, but more than this, she could not avoid the belief that should he go, no one could protect him against the perils he must encounter.

Finding her decision so firm, Billy at length told his mother that, while he regarded her desires and loved her devotedly, and sought to render true filial obedience, yet he must needs follow some occupation that would yield a necessary subsistence for the family now dependent upon his exertions; that he must therefore go. He accordingly arranged the payment of his monthly salary (\$40.00), so that Mr. Russell could turn it over to her on the first of each month during his absence.

Seeing that nothing could deter him from his purpose, Mrs. Cody implored Simpson to watch over her boy with tender regard; that he was not only a son in whom her affections centered, but her staff of life upon whom she was now compelled to lean. Mr. Russell also requested Simpson to protect little Billy at all hazards, and these promises being given, the young hero was suffered to depart on the dangerous journey, leaving a weeping and praying mother behind him.

Before proceeding to a relation of the incidents during the trip, it is needful to give a description of overland freighting, and also some idea of the business conducted by the great freighters, Russell, Majors & Waddell. The wagons used for this purpose were built specially by a large firm in St. Louis, and were constructed with a storage and carrying capacity of 7,000 pounds. To haul these wagons, when loaded, usually required from eight to ten yoke of oxen, according to the weight of the cattle. A train of prairie schooners consisted of twenty-five wagons in charge of the following "officers and seamen," so to speak: The wagon-master, who acted as captain; then came the assistant wagon-master, then the extra hand, then the night herder, then the cavallard driver, whose duty it is to attend the extra cattle. Besides these each team has a driver, so that the full complement for a complete train is thirty-one men.

Among these men a language is used peculiarly their own; the wagon-master is called the "bull-wagon boss," the teamsters are "bull-whackers," and a train is called a "bull outfit." Every man is expected to be thoroughly armed, and each knows where to "fall in" when an attack is made, which at that date was anticipated at any time while passing over the route to Salt Lake. This trail, as described by Buffalo Bill, ran as follows:



Battle of Ash Hollow.



“Through Kansas northwestwardly, crossing the Big Blue river, then over the Big and Little Sandy, coming into Nebraska near the Big Sandy. The next stream of any importance was the Little Blue, along which the trail ran for sixty miles; then crossed a range of sand-hills and struck the Platte river ten miles below old Fort Kearney; thence the course lay up the South Platte to the old Ash Hollow Crossing, thence eighteen miles across to the North Platte, near the mouth of the Blue Water, where Gen. Harney had his great battle in 1855 with the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians. From this point the North Platte was followed, passing Court House Rock, Chimney Rock and Scott’s Bluffs, and then on to Fort Laramie, where the Laramie river was crossed. Still following the North Platte for some considerable distance, the trail crossed this river at old Richard’s Bridge, and followed it up to the celebrated Red Buttes, crossing the Willow Creeks to the Sweet Water, passing the great Independence Rock and the Devil’s Gate, up to the Three Crossings of the Sweet Water, thence past the Cold Springs, where, three feet under the sod, on the hottest day of summer, ice can be found; thence to the Hot Springs and the Rocky Ridge, and through the Rocky Mountains and Echo Cañon, and thence on to the great Salt Lake valley.”

In order to take care of the business which then offered, the freight for transportation being almost exclusively government provisions, Russell, Majors & Waddell operated 6,250 wagons, for the hauling of which they used 75,000 oxen, and gave employment to 8,000 men; the capital invested by these three freighters was nearly \$2,000,000. In their operations, involving such an immense sum of money, and employing a class of laborers incomparably reckless, some very stringent rules

were adopted by the firm, to which all their employes were made to subscribe. In this code of discipline was the following obligation: "I, ———, do hereby solemnly swear, before the Great and Living God, that during my engagement, and while I am in the employ of Russell, Majors & Waddell, that I will, under no circumstances, use profane language; that I will drink no intoxicating liquors of any kind; that I will not quarrel or fight with any other employe of the firm, and that in every respect I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and so direct all my acts as will win the confidence and esteem of my employers, so help me God."

This oath was the creation of Mr. Majors, who was a very pious and rigid disciplinarian; he tried hard to enforce it, but how great was his failure it is needless to say. It would have been equally profitable had the old gentleman read the riot act to a herd of stampeded buffaloes. And he believes it himself now.

Among the bull-whackers who accompanied this train with Billy was J. B. Hickok, who afterward became the noted "Wild Bill," and between the two an intimate acquaintance soon sprang up which ripened into the strongest friendship, enduring year after year until the latter's assassination in 1876. In fact, as Buffalo Bill declares in his autobiography, "Wild Bill was my protector (referring to the time when his first overland trip was made,) and intimate friend, and the friendship thus begun continued until his death."

The route as described was the same as that taken by Billy and the McCarthy boys only a few months before, and when the train reached Plum Creek, having met with no adventure worthy of note, a halt was made for one day to rest the oxen and take a buffalo hunt.

Big game was so abundant in that section of country that writers as far back as 1860 asserted that there were enough buffaloes on the Western prairies to feed the whole world for a century, and that ten thousand hunters shooting day after day for a hundred years could make no perceptible diminution in the number.

Shortly after the oxen were herded and the wagons located a large drove of buffaloes were discovered bearing toward the camp with a party of California emigrants in the rear. On they came in a mad stampede, and no amount of shouting and shooting could swerve them from their course. A few minutes later the whole herd of more than one thousand crazed animals rushed like a wave of thunder into the camp, over the wagons, oxen and other impediments, crippling themselves but making sad havoc of the train. Wagons were overturned and broken, the provisions scattered and trampled, and when the animated wave had swept over and by there was desolation in the wake. The train men had found a great many more buffaloes than they had intended hunting. It required two days of hard work to repair the injury so that the train could proceed.

On the following day, after leaving the Plum Creek camping grounds, the train-men met Joe Smith, Jr., who was acting as a spy for the Mormons, ascertaining the number and character of the "outfits" on the road, and preparing for their capture. As no one in the train knew him he had no difficulty in obtaining all the information he desired.

After remaining with the men for one day, Smith made a plausible excuse for leaving them, and then rode rapidly to an appointed rendezvous where the Mormons, nearly two hundred strong, were awaiting his orders.

When the train had reached the Rocky Mountains,

within eighteen miles of Green River, suddenly the men were surrounded by Joe Smith and his well-armed followers, who, being whites, did not arouse any suspicion upon the part of the train-men until they found themselves covered by Mormon rifles. Resistance, under the circumstances, was impossible, and Simpson, after roundly berating the apostles, was forced to submit.

The result of this adventure was that, after rifling the wagons of whatever provisions they were able to carry, the Mormons set fire to the train and drove off the oxen. The train-men, however, were allowed to retain their arms and one wagon with six yoke of oxen and sufficient provisions to last the party until they could reach Fort Bridger.

After reaching the fort, it being far in November, the party decided to spend the winter there with about four hundred other employes of Russell, Majors & Waddell, rather than attempt a return, which would have exposed them to many dangers and the severity of a rapidly-approaching winter. During this period of hibernation, however, the larders of the commissary became so depleted that the men were placed on one-quarter rations, and at length, as a final resort, the poor, dreadfully emaciated mules and oxen were killed to afford sustenance for the famishing men.

Fort Bridger being located in a prairie, all fuel there used had to be carried for a distance of nearly two miles, and after their mules and oxen were butchered the men had no other recourse than to carry the wood on their backs or haul it on sleds, themselves taking the part of draught animals.

Starvation was beginning to lurk about the post when spring approached, and but for the timely arrival of a westward-bound train loaded with provisions for John-

son's army some of the party must certainly have fallen victims to deadly hunger.

Arrangements having been made for a return to Fort Leavenworth, all the employes at Fort Bridger determined to accompany the returning cavalcade, and Simpson was chosen brigade wagon-master of the new "outfit," which consisted of two trains and four hundred men.

When the trains approached Ash Hollow, Simpson decided to leave the main road and make a cut-off by following the North Platte down to its junction with the South Platte. In traveling the two trains had become separated with an intervening space of fifteen or twenty miles between them, the latter train being in charge of Assistant Wagon-Master Geo. Woods, under whom Billy was acting as "extra."

Simpson, accompanied by Woods, desiring to reach the head train, ordered Billy to "sinch" (saddle) up and follow him. The three rode rapidly for some time until they reached Cedar Bluffs, when they suddenly discovered a score of Indians emerging from the head of a ravine less than half a mile distant, bearing down upon them at great speed.

"Dismount and shoot your mules," was the quick order issued by Simpson, who was at once alive to the situation. As the jaded and stricken animals dropped in their tracks, the three men—or rather two men and one little boy—crouched down behind the mules which lay together in a triangle, and using their dead bodies as breast-works, opened fire on the Indians with Mississippi yagers and revolvers, killing three and wounding two ponies. The red-skins, surprised at the hot-bed they had struck, circled around and sped away again, halting several hundred yards distant, evidently for consultation.

This gave the beleaguered trio time to reload their weapons and prepare for a second charge, which they felt sure would be made.

The Indians were armed with bows and arrows, which of course required close range to be effective, and this gave the little party an advantage which partly compensated for the superior number of their enemies.

Little Billy showed so much pluck in the dangerous position he occupied that Simpson could not help praising him, and by way of further encouragement he said :

“ My brave little man, do you see that Indian on the right, riding out from the party to reconnoiter ? ”

“ Yes, I’m watching him,” was the reply.

“ Well, suppose you give him a shot just by way of experiment.”

Billy at once extended himself and resting his gun on the body of the mule before him, took steady aim and fired.

“ Bully boy ! a splendid shot ! ” shouted Simpson as he saw the Indian topple from his horse, struck evidently in the side, as the wounded savage commenced trying to crawl, his hand pressed over the injured spot. The distance was fully three hundred yards.

After a long parley the Indians scattered, and came charging back again whooping in a delirium of excitement. When they had approached within less than one hundred yards, the besieged party turned loose on them, shooting two more out of the saddle ; but the Indians rushed on discharging a shower of arrows, one of which pierced Geo. Wood’s right shoulder, producing a very painful wound. More than a dozen other arrows struck in the bodies of the dead mules, but inflicted no other damage. For a second time the red warriors were repulsed and when they drew off again it was evidently for

the purpose of resorting to other tactics. Getting beyond the range of the yagers, the Indians formed in a large circle, tethered their ponies and disposed themselves for a siege, with the evident intention of starving out the brave trio.

About three hours afterward, however, the cracking of bull-whackers' whips was heard, and soon the advancing train was seen coming over a hill. The Indians appreciated what this meant, and gaining their ponies rode down on the little party again, discharging another flight of arrows and receiving a volley of bullets in return. No damage was inflicted on either side in the last charge, and the three were saved. Their safety, however, was due entirely to the prompt and decisive action of Simpson, who was a man exactly suited for working out desperate circumstances to his own advantage.

After bandaging Wood's wound the train started again and met with no further detention or accident, reaching Leavenworth in July, 1858. Wild Bill had been a special companion of Billy's during the entire trip, and so warm had become the attachment between them that the latter gave him a pressing invitation to go with him to his home for a short visit, a request which Wild Bill acceded to. During this visit he was treated with so much attention that he became as one of the family, and ever after, until the death of Billy's mother, he called her "Mother Cody."

Billy had been at home scarcely one month before he engaged himself as assistant wagon-master to another train which was made up at Ft. Laramie to carry supplies to a new post just established at Cheyenne Pass. In this, his third trip, he met with no stirring adventure and got through without losing a team or man. This result was in pleasing variance with his two former trips, both of



which had been so full of stirring incidents and disastrous consequences.

Upon his return to Laramie from Cheyenne Pass he entered into an engagement with a Mr. Ward, the post-trader, to trap for beaver, mink and otter on the Chugwater, and poison wolves for their peltries. This enterprise, yielding little or no profit, was abandoned after a two month's experiment, and Billy returned to Laramie, where, a few days after, in company with two others, he started back to Leavenworth.

Upon reaching the Little Blue, the three were jumped by a party of Indians, who chased them for several hours, and doubtless would have captured them had not darkness intervened to assist them in escaping. After "losing" the Indians the trio discovered a cave, in which they resolved to spend the night, but upon lighting a match they were horrified at finding the place tenanted by the bones and dessicated flesh of murdered emigrants, who had gone the way of hundreds of other unfortunate pilgrims seeking gold and fortune in the far West.

Without waiting to make an investigation, the three now badly-frightened travelers broke camp, and regardless of the cold and snow, pushed rapidly forward. After journeying all night they reached Oak Grove, and there taking in a fresh supply of necessaries, resumed their homeward march, reaching Leavenworth in February, 1859.

## CHAPTER IV.

BILLY, who had now reached the age of fourteen years, and was unusually large for one of that age, having been almost wholly without schooling, following his mother's entreaties, concluded to attend a school which had just been opened in the neighborhood of Grasshopper Falls.

The pretty little Mary Hyatt, however, had removed from that section, and Stephen Gobel had forgotten the rivalry which resulted in broken arbors and a bloody sequel. His attention being diverted by no love episodes, Billy applied himself with becoming diligence during the session, which lasted for a period of ten weeks, and made a most gratifying progress. This was the longest term of school he ever attended, and it is doubtful if all the schooling he ever received would aggregate six months, though he is now comparatively well educated, acquired almost wholly by extensive travel and association with polished people.

When spring returned and the warm rays of a congenial sun freshened the brown grass on the prairie, turning it into an emerald sward as boundless almost as the sky overhead, the old impulse seized on Billy again and he determined to seek the far West where adventure and danger incite the restless spirit of brave men.

In addition to the promptings of his own nature there was a further motive in the recent discoveries of gold at Pike's Peak. Who that is thirty years of age now will forget the wild excitement occasioned by the delirium-producing stories which floated as generous as the air into every nook of America, declaring the illimitable storehouse of gold just laid bare at Pike's Peak? There was magic in the very name, and I distinctly recall to mind

now, though a small boy at the time, that the whisky bottles used then had the figure of a pilgrim with pack and pick on his shoulder, blown in one side, with the declaration, "Bound for Pike's Peak," underneath. Why, since I come to think of it, my mother is using one of those old Pike's Peak bottles at this very day as a receptacle for camphor.

Billy, young in years, though now a man in size, in common with thousands of others seized a pick and set out for the wonderful diggings. He located on Cherry Creek where there was a camp called Aurora, on the site now occupied by the city of Denver. After digging around Aurora for a few days, the *ignus fatuus* led him further up the mountains to Black Hawk, where he settled and worked most assiduously for a period of two months without finding as much as a handful of pay dirt. In the meantime provisions were so high that it took a Jacob's ladder to reach the smell of cold beans.

Billy became not only tired but disgusted with the result of his mining labors and resolved to get out of the country. He had no difficulty in finding others in camp of the same turn of mind as himself, and such as he desired as companions he induced to accompany him back. Of the numerous caravans and individuals who adopted as their motto, "Pike's Peak or Bust," Billy and his party fell back on the latter end of the bold legend. They were so badly "busted," in fact, that the only conveyance left them was their legs. Setting out on these the party proceeded on foot to the Platte river, where the idea possessed Billy that they might make the remainder of their journey to Leavenworth on an improvised raft.

By various means, but chiefly by killing game along the way, the party subsisted comfortably while they floated down the stream on a rickety collection of logs.

Matters were satisfactory enough until they reached Jule's ranche, or Julesburg, where having met a swifter current the raft struck a snag and went to pieces with a suddenness no less astonishing than the bath which instantly followed. Fortunately, though the North Platte is a broad stream, it is generally shallow, and the party had to swim but a short distance before they found a footing, and then waded ashore.

Everything having been lost with the raft, including their arms and such provisions as they had, the party stopped at Julesburg to wait for something to turn up.

It so happened that the great Pony Express had just been established between Omaha and Pike's Peak, and other far Western points, including San Francisco. This route ran by Julesburg where the company had an agent in the person of George Chrisman, who was well acquainted with Billy, the two having freighted together for Russell, Majors & Waddell.

Finding Billy out of employment and express riders being scarce, Chrisman offered him a position as rider, which was gladly accepted.

The requirements for this occupation were such that very few were qualified for the performance of the duties. The distance and time required to be made were fifteen miles per hour. Only boys could be employed on account of the weight to be carried, and such laborious riding could be endured by very few. Nevertheless, Billy was an expert horseman and having the constitution and endurance of a broncho he braved the perils and duties of the position and was assigned to a route of forty-five miles.

After riding for several months he received a letter from his mother urging him to return home and give up a position which would surely destroy his health. But he

continued in the employ of the express company until another letter came informing him of the severe illness of his mother ; his filial love being stronger than any other trait of character, he immediately resigned and hurried to the bedside of his beloved parent, whom he was rejoiced to find growing better.

---

## CHAPTER V.

REMAINING at home scarcely one month Billy received an invitation from an old friend, named Dave Harrington, to accompany him on a trapping expedition up the Republican river, which, with hasty preparation, he gladly accepted.

The two started out from Salt Creek valley with an outfit consisting of a wagon filled with traps and provisions drawn by a yoke of oxen.

It was near the middle of November when the two started on the expedition, Mrs. Cody standing in the door when the team moved off, wiping the tears from her eyes and giving bounteous blessings to her beloved boy, watching with painful emotions until the white cover of the wagon which sheltered her dearest treasure became hidden by the prairie undulations in the distance.

The two made excellent progress and met with no detention, arriving at the mouth of Prairie Dog Creek early in December. Here they found an abundance of beaver and trapped with such success that they secured three hundred beaver and one hundred otter skins before the severe weather interfered with their occupation.

Having obtained a full load of peltries it was decided

to remain in the dug-out which they had constructed until the beginning of spring, when the return trip could be made without dangerous exposure.

During the period of waiting the two occupied much of their time shooting elk, large numbers of which were roaming constantly within convenient proximity. On one occasion while out hunting and in pursuit of a large herd of elk, while passing around a large rock projecting over a small ravine, Billy made a false step and was precipitated onto the rocks below, the fall breaking his leg between the knee and ankle. This accident, always serious, was doubly so under the circumstances, when no surgical aid could be had, nor any but a miserably insufficient attention could be given to mitigate the injury. To add still further to the misfortunes of the suffering boy, only a few days before this accident one of the oxen had broken a leg and Harrington had been compelled to shoot the animal. Here the two trappers were, in the midst of winter storms, without a team, and Billy rolling in an agony-which his partner was unable to relieve.

After discussing the situation for some time Harrington said :

“ Well, Billy, this is a bad box, and the only way to get out is for me to reach the nearest settlement and get a team to haul you home.”

The poor boy, though he well knew that the nearest place from which succor could be obtained was fully one hundred and twenty-five miles distant, and appreciated all the terrors of a long and painful waiting alone, among the hungry wolves and bands of equally ferocious Indians, told Harrington to do as he thought best about making the trip.

It is no less pathetic than astonishing, the devotion which is so often found among the Western pioneers

whose uncouth language and grizzly garb, if taken as an index to their true character, would lead to the inference that they are destitute of that human kindness which redeems mankind and compensates our vices.

Brave Dave Harrington, just like Cody himself, big-hearted, noble, generous, self-sacrificing, immediately prepared for the tedious winter journey. Collecting about and within convenient reach of Billy, plenty of dried beef, water and other provisions needful for the sufferer's subsistence, Dave set out on the long trip, bidding his companion be cheerful and to expect his return in twenty-one days.

Finding himself utterly alone, poor Billy—I say “poor” because the facts cannot fail to arouse the deepest pity and make us sympathize with him even now in remembrance, because sensibly affected by the realization of his terrible situation—inside a rude “dug-out,” the trapper's home, consisting of an excavation in the side of a hill boarded up inside, and a single door for entrance and ventilation, Billy lay on his rude litter nursing the inflamed and painful fracture; nothing to relieve his lonesomeness save the howls of prowling wolves scrambling about the chimney, peering down through the mud and sticks and sniffing at the chink under the door. Nothing else to disturb his sombre reflections, save the whistling winds which came sweeping over his rude habitation rattling at the puncheon door and making the trees outside groan in consonance with the biting cold.

Day after day, time, like a foot-sore and weary pilgrim, jogged slowly and drearily along until the tenth day had departed since Harrington left on his mission for help. The shades of mid-winter were just gathering in the darkening fold of eventide when Billy was aroused from his reverie by a singular noise outside the door of his abode.

There were shuffling feet near the entrance, and then a moment of silence, followed by voices which his experienced ears told him proceeded from Indians. Uninvited, more than a dozen Sioux, headed by chief Rain-in-the-face, forced an entrance into the dug-out as though intent upon rifling the place, thinking the owners were absent. But Billy rose up from his pallet and when the Indians' eyes fell upon him a murmur of confused voices followed, which he interpreted as a prelude to the termination of his earthly career.

A stroke of good fortune, however, came to the suffering boy in his direst extremity. Old Rain-in-the-face chanced to be an acquaintance of Billy's, having met him frequently at Laramie, and this acquaintance saved his life. The old chief told Billy that the Indians had intended to kill him, but he had prevailed on them to spare his life on account of his youth. This was joyful news, but the Indians remained in the dug-out all night, feasting themselves on the provisions left for Billy's use, and when they departed on the following morning took with them nearly everything in his larder, besides all the fire-arms. He was thus left in a more trying situation than before, with many days yet to elapse before he could expect Harrington's return.

To add still further to the ordeal of suffering he was compelled to endure, a terrible snow-storm began on the fifteenth day after Dave's departure and continued until the snow had fallen to a depth of nearly three feet, blocking the entrance to his hut, and as he well knew, must seriously delay Harrington, perhaps cause him to lose the way or furnish a trail for a band of murderous Indians. These forebodings almost crazed him, for in addition to the probable loss of his friend, starvation threatened him, and his injured limb had become daily more painful from enforced neglect.



At last the twenty-first day dawned, Billy having computed the time by marking on the wall each day as it passed. Every passing sound he felt sure was the footstep of his friend, but disappointment and hope came and went like the pendulum of a clock ticking: fortune, disaster; fortune, disaster. It was thus that the day came and died, and another dawn succeeded only to arouse the same feelings of hope and dejection.

The fire had expired for lack of fuel to replenish it, and the faint, hungry, now almost hopeless boy, was forced to gnaw the few remaining chunks of frozen venison left him, from which it was possible to obtain barely enough to keep from starving, but never enough to stay hunger.

It was not until the twenty-ninth day after his departure that faithful Dave Harrington arrived at the old hut, his approach being heralded by deep, sonorous commands addressed to the yoke of oxen he had driven through the snows and perils of a northern winter when every hill and valley was the bivouac of depredating Indians.

When the grateful sounds of Dave's voice fell on Billy's ears the famishing boy believed it was the first warning of delirium, admonishing him to prepare for the last horrors of starvation. But soon he heard that same voice ring out clearly before the snow-embarred door:

"Hello, Billy! are you alive yet?"

"Yes, Dave, still alive, but nearly gone."

Then the brawny hands of Harrington fell to work clearing away the snow with such exertions as he would have employed to rescue a friend buried alive. It was but a few moments ere the door was pushed open, and rescued and rescuer fell into each others arms, weeping with the joy of reunited friends after passing through the valley of tribulation.

After rehearsing to each other the incidents that had

transpired during the painful separation, in which Harrington told how he braved dangers few men could survive, tumbling into snow-drifts, wading treacherous streams, etc., the two made preparations to return, though the perils of the journey over a territory beset with so many uninviting prospects were sufficient to deter any but the stoutest hearts.

A bed was carefully made in the wagon of furs and blankets, on which Harrington placed Billy, and bidding good-bye to the old hut in the hillside, the two set out for Junction City. Directly after their departure, the sun came out warm and revivifying, and in three days the snow had melted so rapidly that they experienced no further difficulty in traveling.

Reaching the place from whence Harrington had hired the team to bring Billy away from the dug-out, another yoke of oxen was purchased, being paid for in peltries, and the latter end of the journey was accomplished without further incident.

Arriving at Junction City, Dave and Billy sold their furs at a most satisfactory price, and also the team, for which they had no further use, as government mule trains were almost daily passing that point, bound for Leavenworth, with which transportation was easily arranged.

The two trappers reached Leavenworth in March, 1860, and Billy, unable to get about, begged his friend to accompany him home, for at least a short visit. Harrington, who was warmly attached to his now helpless companion, assented after small persuasion, arriving at Salt Creek Valley after a delay of one day at Leavenworth.

Mrs. Cody was overcome with joy when she received her boy, but cast down again with grief at seeing his condition, which, with a mother's natural solicitude, she at first magnified into a serious injury. Upon learning

the noble, generous part acted by Harrington toward Billy, with tears of thankfulness and gratitude she manifested her appreciation and obligation to the brave man who had submitted to all danger and privation to secure the safety of her darling boy.

Harrington remained with Billy at Mrs. Cody's home for several days, treated with the consideration his sacrifices deserved; but after the lapse of a week, thinking he had been idle too long already, he set about performing some needful work on Mrs. Cody's premises. While planting trees on a cold damp day in the latter part of March the exposure, though not to be compared with what he had so recently passed through, was such that he contracted a severe cold, which speedily grew into pneumonia. Despite the most careful attention from Mrs. Cody and the services of a physician from Leavenworth, poor Dave Harrington, one of the noblest of God's creatures, died, after an illness of one week. Far from home and relations, he yielded up his brave spirit surrounded by most devoted friends who mourned him as a brother, and laid him away under a sod freshened with their tears.

Even to this day to speak of Dave Harrington in Buffalo Bill's presence will turn him from the merriest mood and bring tears to his eyes. There is a large place in Cody's heart reserved for the memory of his dearest friend.

## CHAPTER VI.

BILLY remained at home until his injured leg had become thoroughly strong, and it being now the long and tedious days of summer, he determined to cast about again for occupation somewhere in the great wild West.

Proceeding to Leavenworth he there met Lew Simpson to whom he made known his wishes, and received in reply an invitation to accompany a train just then being made up for Ft. Laramie. But "bull-whacking" was not exactly the employment most desirable, and Billy asked Simpson's influence in securing the position of pony-express rider again.

The result of this application was Billy's departure for Atchison, where he met Mr. Russell, proprietor of the Express, who gave him a letter to Alf. Slade, who was superintendent of the route between Rocky Ridge and Julesburg, with headquarters at Horse Shoe Station, near Laramie.

Having to go overland almost to Laramie, Billy concluded to accompany Simpson's train, thereby making the necessary trip a profitable one. Upon reaching Horse Shoe he presented Mr. Russell's letter to Slade, who, after critically examining the youthful applicant, said:

"My boy, you're a mite too young for the business; I'm afraid you couldn't stand it more'n a week."

"I'd like to try again," responded Billy. "I rode Bill Trotter's division for two months last year and stood the shaking all right, so I don't see why I couldn't do as well now, as I'm a year older."

"Are you the young one who rode that route and was called the youngest express rider in the West?"

"That's me," replied the anxious Billy, "and I'd like to do it again."

"Then I'll take you," answered Slade, "and you can go right to work between Red Buttes and Three Crossings."

Thus the engagement was concluded and Billy entered upon active service the following day.

Red Buttes was a station on the North Platte, and Three Crossings was a point seventy-six miles west, on the Sweetwater. This route, a very long and dangerous one, ran by the site now occupied by the town of North Platte, and through what is now the main street of that place. During a visit I made to Buffalo Bill, at his home, in May, 1881, while riding with him, we crossed the U. P. railroad bridge over the North Platte river, and from this point of observation he showed me where the express crossing of that stream was made. Although the North Platte is generally quite shallow it is more than half a mile wide, and in some places quite deep. The crossing, which was always made on horseback by the express riders, was only two or three hundred yards south of the present railroad bridge, and near the west shore where the channel runs, the water is about twelve feet in depth, besides being very swift. The reader can readily imagine, from this superficial description, the nerve required in a rider over this perilous route, where an average of fifteen miles per hour, including changes of horses, had to be made.

Coming to the North Platte, regardless of the frequent swollen and turbulent condition of the stream, Billy had to plunge in and take his chances of getting to the other shore. Time and again he was carried down on the roaring waters, his horse's feet swept from under him, and met with disasters from which escape seemed impossible; but he always gained the shore and lost very few horses by drowning.

Only a short time after entering upon his duties, upon reaching Three Crossings he found that the rider on the next division, who had a route of eighty-six miles, had been killed during the night before, and he was called on to make the extra trip until another rider could be employed. This was a request the compliance with which would involve the most taxing labors and an endurance few persons are capable of, nevertheless Billy was promptly on hand for the additional journey and reached Rocky Ridge, the limit of the second route, on time. This round trip, of three hundred and twenty-two miles, was made without a stop, except for meals and change of horses, and every station on the route was entered on time, the longest and best ridden pony express journey ever made.

During his occupation as an express rider Billy met with many adventures, not alone in crossing the North Platte, but in running through a country infested with hostile Indians. Fortunately the country was an open one so that an ambush was impossible, but more than a score of times the Indians swarmed down upon him, and he escaped only by the superior swiftness of his horse, and his usual good luck in avoiding bullets and arrows.

After the poney express had become a thoroughly established institution, frequently transporting money and other valuables, the Indians killed several riders whose packs yielded sufficient revenue to make a systematic robbery along the route profitable to the otherwise unemployed red devils. These depredations at length became so great that it was deemed advisable to withdraw the poney express for a time and run stages only as occasion demanded, until the Indians could be punished and made to abandon their robberies and murders.

The condition of the country along the North Platte

had become so dangerous that it was next to impossible for the Overland Stage Company to hire stage drivers, although very high wages were offered.

Billy, now being out of employment as a rider, proffered his services as a stage-driver, which, notwithstanding his youth, were gladly accepted. Directly after beginning this hazardous occupation he met with an adven-



The Attack on the Stage Coach.

ture, which, though it may not have given him a genuine fright, certainly did not contribute any to his estimation of the good times on the plains.

While driving a stage between Split Rock and Three Crossings he was suddenly set upon by about five hundred Sioux whose arms, fortunately, consisted only of bows and arrows. Lieut. Flowers, a brave fellow who was then acting as assistant division agent, sat on the

"boot" beside Billy, and the stage was occupied by half a dozen well armed passengers. A terrible fight ensued, which for a time seemed to threaten certain destruction to the occupants of the vehicle. Billy gave the horses the line while Lieut. Flowers applied the whip, leaving the passengers to look to the defence. Arrows fell around and struck the stage like hail, piercing the sides, striking the horses and dealing destruction generally. Two of the passengers were killed and Lieut. Flowers was badly wounded in the shoulder. Billy grabbed the whip from the wounded officer and kept applying it briskly, shouting defiance in the meantime to his pursuers, and succeeded in driving into Three Crossings without further damage.

This last trip had proved so disastrous that it was determined by the stage company not to rely any longer on the U. S. troops stationed at various posts in the West, but to use their own volunteer employes in an administration of frontier vengeance on the murderous Indians. To accomplish this, requests for volunteers were made, which found response in all the men communicated with, about fifty in number. This force was placed under charge of Wild Bill and was accompanied by Billy. The expedition moved swiftly into the enemy's country as far as Clear Creek where the Indians were found encamped, unconscious of any lurking danger.

Waiting until nightfall the impetuous stage employes descended upon the hostiles, charging through their camp with revolvers in hand. As the astonished Indians poured out of their wigwams they were met by a furious fire which literally swept up the entire camp, leaving scores of dead Indians around the smouldering fires and causing those that escaped the revolver to flee precipitately to the hills and hollows, where, owing to the darkness, they could not be followed.



The expedition was a complete success, for besides so severely punishing the hostiles, about two hundred head of horses were captured and brought safely to Sweetwater Bridge.

---

## CHAPTER VII.

BILLY having performed such excellent services for the Express Company, upon his return from the Clear Creek expedition Alf. Slade tendered him the position of "extra," in which he was required to ride pony-express only during the times when an extra man was needed, which was so seldom that more than two-thirds of his time was unoccupied save as he himself chose to employ it. His pay, however, remained the same as that received by the regular riders.

Located at Horse Shoe, in the center of a country abounding with large game, it was here that Billy first developed a desire for hunting, and by the constant use of firearms thereafter became the best rifle and pistol shot, as he confessedly is, of America to-day. The only competitor he acknowledged in the use of a pistol in 1876 was Wild Bill, whose superior perhaps never lived, and when that wonderful scout, guide and spy was assassinated there were none, and are none now, to dispute with Buffalo Bill the honors of superior marksmanship.

On one occasion, during the period of comparative idleness, Billy concluded to go upon a bear hunt, large numbers of bear being readily found in the adjacent hills. So, saddling his horse and taking a large rifle and two revolvers with him, he departed early in the morning and proceeded up the Horseshoe Valley. An abund-

ance of smaller game, such as antelope, sage-hens and jack rabbits, were constantly passing within gun-shot, but of these he had already killed great numbers, and consequently they were now left unmolested.

Late in the evening, having as yet, found no bear, Billy decided to camp and renew his hunt on the morrow, rather than return without some trophy of his success as a bear hunter.

After building a fire he shot two sage-hens for supper, but just as he was in the act of picking one of the bird's a horse's whinney was heard further up the mountain-side, which gave him serious apprehensions. Scattering the fire-brands he secreted his horse and went upon a tour of investigation to discover the character of his neighbors.

It had now grown quite late, so that the gathering darkness gave some secrecy to his movements, and approaching cautiously the spot indicated by the horse's signal, he soon discovered a dug-out, and several horses tethered about the abode. Approaching still nearer he heard the voices of several persons inside, conversing in a familiar tongue, so that he at once concluded they were trappers or hunters, and being white men, of course friends.

Advancing to the door of the dug-out, Billy rapped on the puncheon entrance and received in reply the challenge :

"Who's thar?"

"A white friend," Billy replied.

At this the door was opened and by the light of a large fire blazing on the ample hearth, there was disclosed to his astonished gaze eight characters whose faces would have been an admirable study for the horrible-loving Dore. It was not only villainy pictured on their fea-

tures, but an iniquity of human nature which might find comparison only in the darkest caverns of Hades, wherein sit the most hideous deformities of vicious wickedness.



Long, grizzled beards, blaring eyes, flaring and beaked noses, mouths like caves of despair, dark complexions, massive forms and bell-mouthed, deep, portentous voices.

Two of these faces Billy had seen before and knew they were worn by men discharged from the employ of the Overland Stage Company; further than this, intuition admonished him that he had struck a den of horse-thieves.

"Come in, don't be back'ard," was the invitation extended, and appreciating the situation Billy had to appear at ease in order to conceal his real anxiety.

"Whar 're you from, and who's with you?"

"Oh, I'm from down the country; been a bear hunting by myself and hearing the whinneying of one of your horses as I was going into camp for the night, thought I'd see who was around; so here I am."

Billy delivered his information in a most unconcerned manner, though he could see serious trouble ahead unless he could get out of the thieves' clutches by some strategy.

"Well, whar's your hoss?"

"I left him tied right down here a few hundred yards, where I was camping. If you don't object I'll leave my gun here and go back and bring him up, for I prefer company and would like to stay with you to-night."

The cunning of this speech could not have been surpassed by the oldest strategist in a frontier settlement. Parting with the gun Billy esteemed a small sacrifice if by so doing he could save himself and horse.

But the scheme, though never so clever, did not succeed as the youthful hunter expected. Two of the villains at once proffered their services to accompany him and assist in bringing the horse to the dug-out.

This social proposition took away at least two-thirds of Billy's nerve, but he had to consent, and the three started off, going directly to the boy's camping place and securing the horse.

"There are a couple of sage-hens by the fire, which I was preparing to cook when I heard your horse nieker; I guess I'll take them along for our supper."

Thus speaking, Billy picked up the birds, and then the thieves led off, leading the boy's horse, toward their den.

Billy fully realized the danger of his situation and knew that the adoption of some desperate expedient could alone save him from a terrible fate, for the thieves would certainly kill him rather than permit his escape and the certainty of his giving information of their rendezvous. So after debating with himself for a few moments, he decided upon a plan which was put into immediate execution. Purposely, and yet as though by accident, he dropped one of the sage-hens, and in picking it up so managed as to let his two villainous companions get slightly ahead. Quick as lightning he struck one of the thieves a stunning blow from behind with the butt of his heavy pistol, and as the other turned about to help his companion Billy shot him dead. Grabbing his horse, he leaped into the saddle and fled back down the mountain. The way, however, was so rugged, abounding in large stones and brush, that his progress was very slow.

The shot was heard by the robbers in the dug-out, and they hurried down to discover the cause. Coming upon the spot, they found a dead companion, and the one that was knocked down had sufficiently recovered to explain the attack.

Pursuit was begun at once, and as the thieves could travel much faster than Billy on horseback, contending with the obstacles of a mountain descent, they soon approached so close that the brave boy leaped from his horse, giving the animal a smart stroke on the quarter which sent him scrambling on, while Billy secreted himself behind a large tree, where the villains soon passed

him in their pursuit of the fleeing horse. A few moments later the shots from their revolvers convinced Billy that his pursuers believed they were still on his track, and hoped either to disable the horse or kill him in the saddle. When the sounds of the pursuit had died away he abandoned the sheltering tree and set off with all possible speed for Horse-Shoe, which he reached in an exhausted and almost famished condition after twelve hours hard travel.

Reporting the particulars of his adventure to Slade, a party of ten was made up at once, headed by Slade himself and guided by Billy, to go in pursuit of the thieves. A rapid travel of six hours brought them to the scene of conflict, where a new-made grave was found which covered Billy's victim, but upon reaching the dug-out they found that place abandoned and nothing left to indicate an intended return. After trying in vain to find the trail, the party abandoned the idea of catching the robbers and returned to Horse-Shoe. Billy was complimented in a most deserving way for the cunning and bravery he displayed in eluding the thieves, and especially for expending a pistol cathartic on one of the number.

Directly after this incident he was put on the road again as express rider, his alternate being Wild Bill. These two rode between Three Crossings and Red Buttes, making better time than any other riders ever on the road. Both, however, had grown so rapidly that their weight exceeded the limit required by the express company, and on this account they were discharged. But after a thirty days' experiment the company found that it was impossible to get other riders who could make the time, so that Billy and his particular friend, Wild Bill, were again employed, riding under an exception to the general order. Here they remained until the tocsin of civil war summoned

brave hearts to the front and changed nearly every man's occupation.

---

## CHAPTER VIII.

MUCH excitement having been created in eastern Kansas by the Ft. Sumpter attack, and also learning of his mother's general ill health, these two causes induced Billy to give up his position as an express rider and hurry home. Mrs. Cody entertained strong Union sentiments, being greatly influenced therein by the outrages she had been compelled to endure at the hands of pro-slavery men, all of whom were now pronounced Southern sympathizers on account of the slavery issue.

A number of Free-State men who had suffered persecution from Missouri pro-slavery incursionists, concluded that the inauguration of war, involving much of the issue that had been fought out between Kansas and Missouri, gave them license to cross the slave State border for retaliatory purposes. In pursuance of this conclusion Capt. Chandler enlisted twenty-five men, Billy being one of the number, to invade Missouri and capture promising horses. This design, though having some of the appearances of a criminal purpose, cannot affect Buffalo Bill's honor now for several reasons, chief among which was the very strong feeling that existed among the Free-State people of Kansas against the Pro-Slavery party of Missouri. No family ever suffered more from iniquitous mobs than the Cody family; robbed time and again; insulted day after day; Mr. Cody foully murdered; their stock driven off; maturing crops devastated and suffering

every conceivable outrage, it was not only natural but proper that the remaining members of the Cody family should regard retaliation as righteous. Further than this, Billy was young in years and influenced by the specious representations of Chandler who gave to his intended acts all the color of law and justice ; these several considerations moved him to become a member of this independent band and share alike its fortunes and reverses.

In the latter part of July, according to a preconcerted arrangement, Chandler's company met at Westport, Missouri, and having received their orders every man went upon a forage through the neighborhood, returning at night with nearly fifty head of first-class horses, taken promiscuously from people in Jackson county. After this bold confiscation the company made their way over into Kansas at Wyandotte where the party separated with an agreement to meet again at the expiration of one week in Leavenworth.

After two or three similar incursions the government took a part in the suppression of the enterprise, and Mrs. Cody learning the true nature of the forays counseled with Billy against lending his aid to such undertakings ; admonishing him that the occupation was dishonorable and he must abandon it. This kind and excellent advice served to enlighten him as to the demerits of such retaliation and he refused to accompany subsequent expeditions.

Later in the fall he carried dispatches between Leavenworth and Ft. Larned, Kansas, and afterward assisted George Long in purchasing horses for the government. Succeeding this employment he became a member of Capt. Tuff's Red Legged Scouts, which was a company composed exclusively of scouts and well-known frontier characters. This organization did most effective



service in the protection of Kansas and fighting the border guerrillas. When not in active duty on the field they were employed in carrying military dispatches between Forts Leavenworth, Larned, Gibson and Dodge.

In the spring of 1863 Billy was engaged to conduct a merchant train from Leavenworth to Denver, which being conducted through safely, he received a letter on the day of his arrival there informing him of the serious illness of his mother. Instantly he saddled his horse and made all possible speed homeward, riding almost day and night until he reached the bedside of his beloved parent. He was deeply distressed to find his mother quite ill, but not so ill as to banish hope for her recovery. But her sickness gave him such anxiety that he refused to leave home, remaining to minister to her comfort and necessities. When the cold winds and sudden changes of fall ushered in the new season, Mrs. Cody gradually grew worse despite the most unremitting care, and on the 22d day of November she died.

Billy could find nothing to console him for the loss of a parent so well beloved; there was a void in his nature which no engagement could fill; aimlessly he wandered about the old homestead with the face of his dead mother, pale and pitiful, ever before his confused eyes; there, before him, were her noble acts; her brave, self-sacrificing disposition, the source from whence he drew the very nourishment of his existence, the goodly counsel that made his manhood. How many tears he shed over her grave; how many fresh flowers he planted in the coming spring; how many hours he spent beside her last earthly resting place and bedewed it with copious offerings welling up from the springs of his heart! There, under the prairie sod, where the winds gambol ceaselessly with waving grasses and spontaneous flowers; under the

branches of a tree planted by the hands that once carried water to her feverish lips and were clasped with hers in prayer, sleeps a pioneer's wife and a true hero's mother; waiting the judgment day; waiting that last reunion and forgetting the sorrowful experiences of this eventful life.

The family, bereft of a mother, was not separated, for one of Billy's sisters having been married in the early part of the preceding spring, her husband settled on the homestead and kept the sisters of the family together. But Billy was now doubly anxious to do something that would divert his mind from the loss which gave him such heart-breaking grief; and yet there seemed to be some strange influence trying to hold him near the sacred earth which enclosed the remains of his soul's affection.

Some weeks after this most melancholy incident Billy went to Leavenworth and there for the first time in his life, acting under the false impression that inebriety would mitigate his grief, deliberately drank to excess and naturally fell among wicked and depraved characters. While on a protracted spree and unconscious of what he was doing, he joined Jennison's Seventh Kansas Jayhawkers, which had recently been organized for operation in Missouri, but they were soon called upon to perform some hard service in Tennessee and Mississippi.

In the spring of 1864, Billy moved with his regiment to Memphis and from there to Tupelo, Miss., where, Gen. A. J. Smith having command, he participated in a hard fought battle with Gen. Forrest, the Confederates being badly whipped. After some skirmishing in Mississippi, Billy's regiment was ordered back to Missouri, entering the State at Cape Girardeau. The Confederate General Price had just entered upon his great raid in Missouri, and Jennison's regiment was ordered to push forward and either intercept the enemy or harass his rear until

Gen. Curtis could operate in conjunction with Gen. Smith.

The courage, cunning and woodcraft displayed by Billy had not escaped the soldierly eye of Gen. Smith, and as brave and strictly reliable men were now urgently needed, he was made a non-commissioned officer and placed on detached service as scout. In this position he did not confine himself to the usual duties of scout, but voluntarily performed the additional and more dangerous service of spy, for which he was well qualified. Serving in this double capacity he obtained much valuable information and soon became the pride of Gen. Smith's corps, and was regarded as one of the best general utility men in the whole army, never hesitating to perform a service however great the danger might be.

While riding through Southern Missouri an incident occurred which well illustrates the magnanimity of his character. Being more than a mile in advance of the command, he came to a thrifty appearing farm-house at which he alighted for a drink of water. The only occupants of the house at the time were an elegant elderly lady and her beautiful daughter. These two ladies were at first very much frightened at the appearance of a Yankee, but nevertheless exhibited their courteous dispositions by giving him water and setting out a chair with genuine hospitality, in which they asked him to rest. The elderly lady, in questioning Billy concerning the Union forces, was informed that the army was now less than one mile off and would soon march past the house. At this much fear was entertained and expressed by the ladies lest the soldiers should sack the premises and do violence to the place, knowing they were in an enemy's country. But he quieted their solicitude by begging them to be unconcerned, as he would see that they were not molested.

As the army came up, preceded by the commander and staff officers, Billy placed himself at the entrance of the house to act as sentry and guard to protect the premises. A moment later several soldiers attempted to enter, but he ordered them to stop, declaring at the same time that he had been placed there to protect that property from molestation. Not doubting his authority the soldiers passed on and not a thing was taken from the place.

The ladies felt so grateful to their protector that they prepared an excellent dinner for him, to which his hunger was paying tribute when suddenly three men sprang into the house and leveled their guns at him.

"Hold on; don't hurt this gentleman; he is our friend!" cried the ladies to the three men, who were the husband and two brothers of the family.

The guns were immediately lowered and when the situation had been explained to them each of the men shook Billy warmly by the hand and thanked him heartily for his kind interference. The dinner being concluded under the happiest circumstances, Billy bade adieu to the family and by fast riding soon overtook the command.

---

## CHAPTER IX.

YOUNG Cody remained with the army in Missouri, engaging in the conflicts between the Union forces and Gen. Price until the winter of 1864-5 put an end to the military operations and both armies went into winter quarters. During this period of inactivity Billy visited St. Louis and by good luck was detailed for special service at headquarters.

Winter is always a gay season in the city with its theatres, balls, society gatherings, sleigh-riding and various recreative sports, and Billy being of a most entertaining and jovial character was very soon introduced to many charming ladies of St. Louis society. Among the large number of elegant and beautiful girls whose acquaintance he made was one specially attractive to him, she being the center of a large group of admirers, all of whom were striving for the honor of her smiles and preference. The young lady's name was Louisa Frederici, and she was the daughter of an old and influential citizen. Not only was she well connected and a lady of most admirable character, but she also possessed a beauty of face and perfection of form which were well nigh irresistible; large, lustrous, brown eyes, beautifully arched with elegant brows; skin fair as the lily, a mouth which seemed to invite kisses, and hair profuse as a Naiad's and black as a raven's wing.

It is only proper to say that the first time Billy met the beautiful Louisa he fell in love too deep to ever hope for escape. But always a man of fortunate circumstances, his good luck did not forsake him in his love-making. It is unusual to descant upon the beauty of a man, but I will not be charged with hypercritical enthusiasm when I say that Billy was then, as he is now, certainly one of the handsomest men in America, a claim which I am sure all the ladies will maintain, gathering their opinion from the portrait given of him in this book. Miss Louisa thought she had never met a finer-appearing gentleman, and to say that Billy's all-absorbing affection was reciprocated is but to declare what the sequel proved.

Before the winter expired he had made a frank acknowledgment of his love and elicited a response which led to an engagement, but while overjoyed at his excel-

lent success he realized that he was illy prepared to take care of a wife just then; so without fixing the date for their marriage the lover went back to his duties and remained with his command until the war closed. He then accepted the situation of stage driver proffered him by Bill Trotter, who was agent for that division of the road between Kearney and Plum Creek, the route which led over the same ground where Billy killed his first Indian.

He continued to drive the stage until he had saved up several hundred dollars, and feeling now that he was in proper position for a consummation of his great desire, returned to St. Louis, where, on the 6th of March, 1866, he was married to Miss Frederici, the ceremony being performed at the bride's residence before a large assemblage of friends.

After receiving many congratulations, the couple took passage on a Missouri river steamer for Kansas, which was to be their home.

During the bridal trip Billy was recognized by three or four passengers who had been pro-slavery men before the war and Southern sympathizers throughout that eventful period. Hate and vengeance still rankled in their bosoms, and though afraid themselves to attack the brave young Benedict, they found means to communicate with some of their guerrilla friends that Bill Cody, the scout and fighter, was on board and might fall an easy prey to them.

When the steamer landed at a desolate point on the river seventy-five miles west of Lexington, to take on a fresh supply of wood, more than a dozen guerrillas appeared on the bank and tried to board the boat, but the captain frustrated their designs by ordering the stage-plank drawn in and then backing the steamer out before the guerrillas could gain the deck. Several shots were

fired at the boat, but no special damage resulted. Billy had anticipated trouble, owing to remarks he had overheard from a party that had engaged passage at Lexington, and when the guerrillas appeared on the bank, instead of keeping himself close in his stateroom, he took a position at the head of the cabin stairs, and with a pistol in each hand, stood unconcernedly waiting for the approach of his enemies. Had they succeeded in getting on board there would have been one of the liveliest fights since Wild Bill met the McCandlas gang.

When Cody and his beautiful bride reached Leavenworth they were met at the landing by a long line of carriages, which they were soon apprised contained nearly a hundred of his friends, who, having learned of his marriage and passage on the steamer, had made large preparations to give him a grand reception. A band of music headed the carriage procession and the party were driven directly to the house of one of Billy's married sisters, where the day and evening were spent in a truly Western jollification, feasting, dancing and music, the festivities being participated in by the best society of Leavenworth, among whom Billy enjoyed great popularity.

Without wasting more time in a bridal tour, young Cody went to Salt Creek Valley, where he rented the house once occupied by his mother, and established a hotel known as the Golden Rule House, which he conducted with profit until the following September, when his old desire for the freedom and stirring adventures of the plains induced him to sell out and seek employment as a scout.

At this time the Kansas Pacific railroad was in process of construction and had reached a point as far west as Salina, which had become an active place, and thither

Billy directed his way. Reaching Junction City, he met Wild Bill, who was then scouting for the government, with headquarters at Fort Ellsworth (Fort Harker). By advice of the latter he proceeded to the post at Ellsworth, where his application for the position of scout was favorably received and he at once went on duty.

While scouting and guiding parties between Fts. Ellsworth and Fletcher, in which service he was employed for a period of several months, he met Gen. Custer, who had been ordered to accompany Gen. Hancock on an Indian campaign. Custer, with ten men, was at Ellsworth and desired a guide to conduct him to Ft. Larned, a distance of sixty-five miles. Cody was selected by the commanding officer of the post to accompany the General, who was to start on the following day. When the time for departure arrived Cody appeared riding a small, mouse-colored mule while Gen. Custer and his escort were mounted on fine, high-mettled steeds that were champing their bits with impatience to be off. Gen. Custer laughed heartily at the scout's sorry-looking palfrey and declared that it would be impossible for the "little mouse" to travel as rapidly as he wished. Billy, however, insisted on riding the mule, and after a few hours of fast traveling the little animal began to show its bottom by keeping the advance and at length put so much distance between him and the fine war steeds that Billy had to rein up from time to time in order that the General might overtake him. The best laugh, therefore, was with him who laughed last, and Custer was so astonished that he wanted to trade his fine horse for the sorry little mule, for with Custer the chief consideration was rapid travel regardless of the means employed—but he couldn't get the mule.

Billy's social disposition and contagious good humor



won the admiration of Custer, who expressed much anxiety to engage his services, telling him that a position would be open for him at any time he desired to join the command. The friendship thus formed was cultivated in after years and was intimate until the pathetic but heroic death of that singularly brave officer.

---

## CHAPTER X.

HAVING guided Gen. Custer and his staff to Ft. Larned Cody, on his return, was ordered to report at Ft. Hays. About this time a large band of Indians had attacked the working force on the Kansas Pacific railroad and besides killing six men they had driven off a hundred head of horses and mules.

Major Ames of the Tenth Cavalry (colored) was ordered to take one company and a mountain howitzer and pursue the marauders. Cody was selected as scout and guide to the expedition, which set out on the trail leading along the Saline river.

On the second day after leaving Hays the Indian camp was discovered on the opposite side of Saline river and preparations were hastily made for the attack. An opportunity was now to be offered for the colored troops to manifest their pluck, a large amount of which they seemed to carry on their tongues which wagged continually with expressions of impatience to get "turned loose on de red coyotes." The Howitzer was stationed on a knoll overlooking the Indian camp and placed under a guard of twenty men, while the main portion of the company crossed over to begin the attack. Scarcely had the

crossing been made when a terrible yelling was heard in the rear, and upon looking back Major Ames beheld the colored flower of his army fleeing with all possible haste, hatless and without arms, before a hundred Indians that had charged on the guard and were now dancing around the captured howitzer. Major Ames had to take up just a little of the precious time in swearing at his cowardly men who had fled at the approach of the enemy without firing a gun; but he soon ordered a charge back up the knoll and easily re-took the gun, but the Major was badly wounded in the attack and the command thereafter practically fell on Cody.

There were more Indians than had been anticipated, and the command was not sufficient to cope with them; so after a hard fight of about two hours it became a serious matter, not so much how to disperse the enemy as how to manage an escape, of which there seemed for a time small probability. A retreat was begun in which the colored troops unlimbered themselves in fine style, making good progress despite the dodging they practiced. Night approached at last like a generous friend and by the protection the darkness afforded about one-half the company succeeded in reaching Hays, the remainder having fallen victims to the victorious Indians, who, however, had suffered the loss of a goodly number of their warriors.

Returning from a decidedly disastrous expedition Cody declared that he never wanted to go "hunting Indians again with colored poachers."

From Ft. Hays he carried dispatches to Ft. Harker, and having nothing special to engage him there, he visited Ellsworth where Wild Bill still made his headquarters. While on this visit he made the acquaintance of a Western character named William Rose, a railroad contractor and a man of many schemes. His hobby just at

this particular time chanced to be the location of a town along the railroad, in which he expected to make a fortune selling corner lots. He disclosed his enterprise to Cody, whom he knew by reputation, as did every other person in the West, and the matter was presented with such ingenious argument that Billy entered into the scheme inflated with the promises of the undertaking. Accordingly a sight was selected on the west side of Big Creek, one mile from Ft. Hays, which was duly laid out into blocks, with a large public square in the center, the whole being handsomely drawn on a plat of gorgeous colors. To give the place a start the two enterprising enthusiasts built the first house, which was a store, and stocked it with a good line of general merchandisc. The town was then duly christened "Rome," because the place was expected to "howl." A lot was donated to every one who would erect a building thereon and this generous proposition had a most gratifying effect, for building began with such a rush that in one month's time there were two hundred frame residences, four stores, and about twenty saloons. Lots were selling rapidly for fifty dollars each and things were swimmingly prosperous with the firm of Cody & Rose. Visions of incalculable riches hung before their delighted imagination and happiness was pictured by an approaching ability to buy up the country, including the railroad then under construction. Rome was howling! But just as the dream was approaching realization, a gentleman named Webb—Dr. Webb—stopped in town and enquiring for the proprietors of Rome, was directed to Cody & Rose's store, where he found the two gentlemen, as usual, figuring their prospective gains.

"Got a booming town here I see," said Dr. Webb by way of introduction.

"Yes, got the best town now and the biggest city hereafter on the road. Want to buy some lots?" responded Cody.

"Well, I don't know as I want to *buy* any lots, but I would like to go into partnership with you."

"Partnership!" why, great heavens, man, we don't want any partners."

"I thought you might want to take me in since I am agent for the K. P. road sent out to locate towns on the route."

"That's all right, but we've got the bulge on you here and can take care of this town by ourselves."

"Well, if that's your decision, I guess I'll have to start another town alongside of you just by way of competition."

On the following day Dr. Webb went one mile west of Rome and laid out a town which he named Hays City. But Rome being altogether better situated than Hays and having such an admirable beginning, the Doctor made a proposition to donate two lots in his new place to every one who would erect a building thereon, and in addition to this, speaking as if by authority of the railroad officials, he made the announcement that the company intended to locate and build their machine shops, round-house and depot at Hays City, leaving Rome in a permanent decline.

These flattering representations so seriously affected the firm of Cody & Rose that during the next few days, when they saw the whole town of Rome either on rollers or on wagons moving over to Hays City, they would have closed out their prospects for two cents and a half on the dollar—perhaps much less even than that. Very soon the two dispirited town-owners were sitting in front of their store, now the sole remaining building of the once

flourishing town of Rome, contemplating the mutability of human expectation; the presto, change! from riches to the dull, solemn fact of comparative poverty. How many times they said to themselves and to each other, "Had we only taken Webb in as a partner!"

However, it was some consolation to receive from their successful rival a deed to four of the best lots in Hays, but this generous and balsamic application to their wounded anticipations did little to mitigate their feelings of poverty.

During the short period that Rome was on the rise Billy had fitted up the rear part of his store and occupied it with his wife and infant daughter, Orta, but when the bankrupting hegira to Hays City set in Mrs. Cody paid a visit to her relations in St. Louis, where she remained for some time and until a comfortable home was prepared for her at Hays.

Abandoning all hope of making anything out of town enterprises, Cody and his friend Rose took a sub-contract for grading five miles of road west of Big Creek, and while prosecuting this work Cody came into possession of a horse which afterward figured conspicuously in his interesting adventures. As Rose thoroughly understood railroad contract work he was left to boss the men while Billy performed an equally important work, furnishing them with meat. To procure these provisions it was necessary to hunt almost constantly, relying entirely on buffaloes, which were less plentiful in that section than in the country through which he had ridden the pony express.

On one occasion as he was starting out on his favorite horse, Old Brigham by name, he saw half a dozen well-mounted officers approaching from Ft. Hays, who were out for a buffalo hunt. Billy carried with him a breech-

loading needle gun which he called "Lucretia Borgia," an excellent weapon; but old Brigham's caparisons consisted solely of an ancient blind bridle. To the officers, who ascertained that Cody was also out after buffaloes, this "outfit," a sleepy, angular, old horse, without saddle, bottle or other accessories, appeared so ridiculous that they accosted him:

"Young man, ain't that a sorry team you're driving? You don't expect to ride down any buffaloes with an old crow-bait like that, do you?"

"Don't know, might catch up with the calves by pushing hard on the reins," answered Billy.

The party had ridden out on the prairie scarcely two miles when they discovered a herd of eleven buffaloes making rapidly across the country toward a branch of Big Creek. The well mounted officers started after the game with all the speed they could get out of their fine horses, expecting to run the buffaloes down within two or three miles. Instead of following the officers, Billy pulled the reins on Old Brigham, who uncoupled himself in fine style, and struck out at full speed on a different course from that pursued by the other party. Cody knew from the direction and speed of the buffaloes about the point they would strike the creek, so heading for an objective point he struck the game fully a mile in advance of the officers. Throwing off the old blind bridle he let his well-trained horse come alongside the herd, and when he would shoot a buffalo Brigham would run alongside another, and working thus as if by rule Billy killed the entire herd in twelve shots before the astonished officers came within firing distance.

"You see," said Cody, as the well mounted amateur hunters came up to where he had dismounted and was now standing by his unbridled horse, "I pushed well on

the reins, a thing which you, perhaps, neglected to do. However, as I have got all the game, I don't want you to go back empty handed, so just help yourselves to tongues and tenderloins.

The superior officer in the squad then remarked: "My name is Graham, Captain of the Tenth Cavalry; now I want to know your name."

"Want to know my name? Why, it's nothing but Bill Cody."

"Bill Cody! that they call Billy? Good gracious! I've heard of you more than of any other man in the West. Well, I am truly glad to see you. Let me introduce you to Lieutenants Ezekiel, Reed and Emmick, they all belong to my regiment."

"Glad to meet you, gentlemen, for I'm something of an army man myself."

"I want to say, Billy, or Mr. Cody, that I have heard much concerning your peculiar qualifications as a rider, hunter and fighter, but heretofore I have been inclined to discredit the stories told of you. But let me say now, that after seeing you perform the remarkable feat of killing eleven buffaloes in about three minutes, from a horse without bridle or saddle, that I am prepared to believe almost anything."

"Why, Captain, that is no trick at all on my part, for old Brigham (that's my horse's name) is the one that did the hunting, I only did the shooting."

This manner of conversation continued until the wagons sent out from Billy's camp came up to haul off the buffaloes. But before separating the officers extended a very cordial invitation to Cody to visit them at Ft. Hays, where they expected to be stationed during the summer.

## CHAPTER XI.

HAVING completed the contract for grading five miles of road-bed, Billy was looking for another engagement when he received a proposition from the Goddard Brothers, who were boarding twelve hundred construction employes, to furnish them with meat. The amount required was five buffaloes per day, to procure which involved hard riding, but the labor was small compared with the danger to be incurred from the Indians who were killing every white man they could find in that section. Nevertheless, an offer of five hundred dollars per month for the service made Billy unmindful of the exertion or peril, and he went to work under contract to supply all the meat required. During this engagement he had no end of wonderful escapes from bands of Indians, not a few of whom he sacrificed to secure his own safety. By actual count he also killed, under his contract with the Goddard Brothers, *four thousand two hundred and eighty* buffaloes. To appreciate the extent of this slaughter, by approximate measurement, these buffaloes, if laid on the ground end to end, would make a line more than five miles long, and if placed sideways, on top of each other, they would make a pile over two miles high.

By special arrangements all the heads of the largest buffaloes killed by Bill were preserved and delivered to the K. P. railroad company, by which they were turned into excellent advertisements for the road. Many of these heads may still be seen in prominent places marking the center of an oval board containing the advertisement of the road.

So well had Billy performed his part of the contract that the men connected with the Kansas Pacific road gave



him the appellation by which he is still known throughout the world, "BUFFALO BILL."

A record of all his battles with the Indians during this period of professional hunting would be so long that few could read it without tiring, for there is a sameness connected with attacks and escapes which it is difficult to recite in language always sparkling with interest. But Buffalo Bill being a brave man under all circumstances when bravery is essential, and cautious when that element subserved the purpose better, was almost daily in a position of danger, and many times escaped almost like the Hebrew children from the furnace.

So justly celebrated had Buffalo Bill now become that Kit Carson, on his return from Washington City in the fall 1867, stopped at Hays City to make his acquaintance. Carson was so well pleased with Bill's appearance and excellent social qualifications that he remained for several days the guest of the celebrated buffalo killer and scout. Upon parting, the renowned Kit expressed the warmest admiration for his host and conveyed his consideration by inviting Bill to visit him at Fort Lyon, Colorado, where he intended making his home. But the death of Carson the following May prevented the visit.

Like every other man who achieves distinction by superior excellence in some particular calling, Buffalo Bill (who had now shed the familiar title of Billy), had his would-be rivals as a buffalo killer. Among this number was a well-known scout named Billy Comstock, who sought to dispute the claim of champion. Comstock was quite famous among the Western army, being one of the oldest scouts and most skillful hunters. He was murdered by Indians seven years after the event about to be recorded, while scouting for Custer.

Buffalo Bill was somewhat startled one day upon re-

ceipt of a letter from a well-known army officer offering to wager the sum of \$500 that Comstock could kill a greater number of buffaloes in a certain given time, under stipulated conditions, than any other man living. This was, of course, a challenge to Buffalo Bill, who, upon mentioning the facts, found hundreds of friends anxious to accept the wager, or who would have put up any amount that Bill's claim to the championship could not be successfully disputed by any person living.

The bet was promptly accepted, and the following conditions agreed to: A large herd of buffaloes being found, the two men were to enter the drove at eight o'clock, A. M., and employ their own tactics for killing until four o'clock, P. M., at the end of which time the one having killed the largest number was to be declared winner of the wager and also the "champion buffalo killer of America." To determine the result of the hunt, a referee was to accompany each of the hunters on horseback and keep the score.

The place selected for the trial was twenty miles east of Sheridan, Kansas, where the buffaloes were so plentiful that thousands could be found without difficulty, and the country being a level prairie rendered the hunt easy and afforded an excellent view for those who wished to witness the exciting contest.

There was so much excitement created by a general publication of the match that when the day arrived several hundred visitors were present, among the crowd being an excursion party of one hundred people from St. Louis, which was accompanied by Buffalo Bill's wife and youngest daughter.

Comstock was well mounted on a strong, spirited horse and carried a 42-calibre Henry rifle. Buffalo Bill appeared on his famous horse, Old Brigham, and in this

he certainly had great advantage, for this sagacious animal knew all about his rider's style of hunting buffaloes, and therefore needed no reining.

The party rode out on the prairie at an early hour in the morning and soon discovered a herd of about one hundred buffaloes grazing on a beautiful stretch of ground just suited for the work in hand. The two hunters rode rapidly forward accompanied by their referees, while the spectators followed a hundred yards in the rear. At a given signal the two contestants dashed into the center of the herd, dividing it so that Bill took the right half while Comstock pursued those on the left.

Now the sport began in magnificent style amid the cheers of excited spectators, who rode as near the contestants as safety and non-interference permitted. Buffalo Bill, after killing the first half-dozen stragglers in the herd, began an exhibition of his wonderful skill and strategy; by riding at the head of the herd and pressing the leaders hard toward the left, he soon got the drove to circling, killing those that were disposed to break off on a direct line. In a short time witnesses of this novel contest saw Buffalo Bill driving his portion of the herd in a beautiful circle and in less than half an hour he had all those in his bunch, numbering thirty-eight, lying around within a very small compass.

Comstock, in the meantime, had done some fine work, but by attacking the rear of his herd he had to ride directly away from the crowd of anxious spectators. He succeeded in killing twenty-three which, however, lay irregularly over a space three miles in extent, and therefore while he killed fewer than his rival, he at the same time manifested less skill, which, by contrast, showed most advantageously for Buffalo Bill.

All the party having returned to the apex of a beauti-

ful knoll, a large number of champagne bottles were produced and amid volleys of flying corks toasts were drunk to the buffalo heroes, Buffalo Bill being especially lauded and now a decided favorite.

But these ceremonies were suddenly interrupted by the appearance of another small herd of buffalo cows and calves, into which the two contestants charged precipitately. In this "round" Bill scored eighteen, while Comstock succeeded in killing only fourteen.

The superiority of Buffalo Bill was now so plainly shown that his backers, as well as himself, saw that he could afford to give an exhibition of his wonderful horsemanship, while continuing the contest, without fear of losing the stakes. Accordingly, after again regaling themselves with champagne and other appetizing accessories, the cavalcade of interested spectators rode northward for a distance of three miles, where they discovered a large herd of buffaloes quietly browsing. The party then halted, and Buffalo Bill, removing both saddle and bridle from Old Brigham, rode off on his well-trained horse, directing him solely by motions of his hand. Reaching the herd by circling and coming down upon it from the windward quarter, the two rival hunters rushed upon the surprised buffaloes and renewed the slaughter. After killing thirteen of the animals, Buffalo Bill drove one of the largest buffaloes in the herd toward the party, seeing which many ladies who were among the interested spectators became very much frightened, showing as much trepidation, perhaps, as they would have manifested had the buffalo been an enraged lion. But when the ponderous, shaggy-headed beast came within a few yards of the party Bill shot it dead, thus giving a grand *coup-d'etat* to the day's sport, which closed with this magnificent exhibition of skill and daring.



BUFFALO BILL WINS THE CHAMPIONSHIP.



The day having now been far spent, and time called, it was found that the score stood thus: Buffalo Bill, sixty-nine; Comstock, forty-six. The former was therefore declared winner and entitled to the championship as the most skillful buffalo-slayer in America.

---

## CHAPTER XII.

AFTER the great buffalo killing match the name of Buffalo Bill became familiar all over the country, and his exploits, generally, were a topic people never grew tired of discussing. All his great battles with the Indians and valuable services as a scout were re-told, not only at the fireside, but also by the military operating in the West. He was beginning to be appreciated.

In the spring of 1868 a violent Indian war broke out in central and western Kansas, which assumed such a serious aspect that Gen. Sheridan, in order to be on the field, took up his headquarters at Hays City. Directly after making this move the General sent for Buffalo Bill and in person tendered him a position as scout and guide, which was immediately accepted. He was then ordered to report to Capt. Parker, at Fort Larned, for services.

Knowing that he would be absent from home for a long time, he sent his wife and child to Leavenworth, where he would have better opportunities of visiting them than elsewhere.

Reaching Ft. Larned Bill was appointed a special scout to Gen. Hazen who had just arranged for a trip to Ft. Sarah, thirty miles distant. Near Larned there were several bands of Comanche and Kiowa Indians who had not

yet joined their hostile brothers, but were seeking a pretext for so doing, especially as the fort was garrisoned by only two companies of infantry and one of cavalry. The head chief of these restless Comanches was Satanta, an old villain who has since figured in Texas outrages and been duly hanged according to a righteous law.

Gen. Hazen started for Ft. Sarah in a six-mule wagon under an infantry escort of twenty men, with Buffalo Bill as guide. The trip was made in safety, but as the General concluded to go on to Ft. Harker without a guide, Bill was ordered to return to Larned. Mounting his mule he was making good time toward the post, when about half way, near Pawnee Rock, forty Indians came rushing down on him. Instead of presenting their arms, however, they presented their hands, saying, "How! How!" with such warmth of feeling that Bill accepted their greeting, put instead of shaking his hand they jerked him with such violence that he was almost unseated, while others in the party grabbed the reins of his bridle and started to lead the mule off. Bill was at an unreasonable disadvantage, but nevertheless he was ready for a fight regardless of the odds. Fortunately for him, as it proved, when he attempted to draw his pistols one of the Indians struck him a violent blow on the head with a tomahawk, rendering him so nearly insensible that they easily disarmed and bound him. All this time the Indians were howling their war cries and otherwise indicated their purpose of going on the war path, so that Bill very naturally supposed he was to be one of their first victims.

His captors led him for nearly two miles down a creek, where they reached another body of Indians apparently in council. Old Satanta, whom Bill knew by having seen once before, occupied the chief council seat, and before this old veteran thief and murderer he was brought.



At this juncture a marvelously cunning expedient came to mind and was at once adopted by Bill. He knew that the Indians were nearly out of meat and were expecting a large herd of cattle which had already been promised them by Gen. Hazen. In reply, therefore, to the first inquiries of Satanta, Bill, speaking in a very bold and ostentatious manner, said :

“I have been after a big heap lot ‘who-haws’ for your people. Why have your young warriors acted toward me like a pack of hungry coyotes?”

This announcement caused the old rogue to change his facial expression from a demure, murderous look to a broad, happy grin ; and after questioning the cunning scout until he had elicited more specious prevarications than can be heard in a Turkish court, Satanta tried to outlie Bill by declaring that his young men had meant no harm by their acts, intending only to have some sport by testing his bravery. He now asked Bill to drive the cattle down to the opposite side of the creek where they could herd and graze them, proffering an Indian escort if he desired.

Bill promptly told him that he needed no escort but would drive the cattle to the spot indicated, as that was in pursuance of instructions from Gen. Hazen.

His mule having been returned to him Bill mounted and rode toward the creek, reflecting on the excellent success of his expedient and the probability of being followed. The creek was quite broad but easily forded, so that it was no barrier to pursuit if the Indians should suspect the falsity of his representations. Upon reaching the opposite bank he was therefore very much alarmed at seeing a dozen of the Indians riding toward him as if to determine the accuracy of his statements. It chanced that the land on that side of the creek which

he had now gained was considerably depressed, so that after passing over the bank he was hidden from view until the Indians gained the apex. This advantage he used so well, by putting the mule at his highest rate of speed, that when the suspicious Indians gained the bank's summit he was fully one mile in advance and riding furiously toward Ft. Larned.

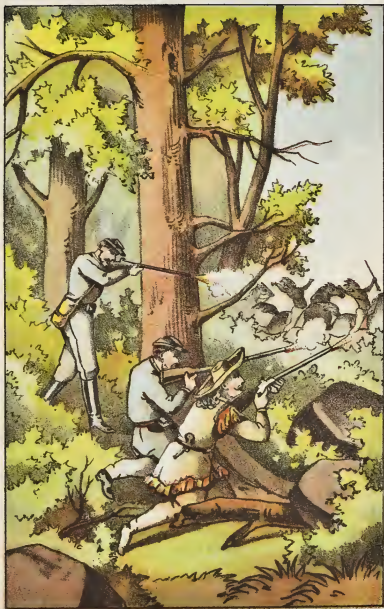
Upon seeing the fleeing scout there were no further grounds for suspecting his motives, so the Indians, who were mounted on excellent ponies, dashed after him as though they were impelled by a promised reward of all the whisky and bacon in the Big Father's commissary for his scalp.

Bill was trying to save his hair and the Indians were equally anxious to secure it, so that the ride prompted by these diametrically opposed motives was as furious as Tam O'Shanter's.

After running over about three miles of ground Bill turned his head only to be horrified with the sight of his pursuers gaining rapidly on him. He now sank the spurs a little deeper into his mule, let out another inch of the reins and succeeded in increasing the speed of his animal, which appeared to be sailing under a second wind.

It was thus the chase continued to Ash Grove, four miles from Ft. Larned, at which point Bill was less than half a mile ahead of the Indians, who were trying to make line shots with him and his mule as the target. Reaching Pawnee Fork he dashed into that stream and as he gained the opposite shore and was rounding a thick clump of trees he was rejoiced to meet Denver Jim, a prominent scout, in company with a private soldier, driving a wagon toward the post.

A moment spent in explanation determined the three



AMBUSHING THE INDIANS.



men upon an ambush. Accordingly, the wagon was hastily driven into the woods, and posting themselves at an advantageous point they awaited the appearance of the red-skinned pursuers. "Look out!" said Bill, "here they come, right over my trail." True enough, the twelve painted warriors rode swiftly around the elump of brush, and the next instant there was a discharge of shots from the ambush which sent two Indians sprawling on the ground, where they kicked out their miserable existence. The others saw the danger of their position, and making a big circle, rode rapidly back toward their war party.

When the three men reached Larned, Buffalo Bill and Denver Jim each displayed an Indian scalp as trophies of a successful ambush, and at the same time apprised Capt. Parker of the hostile character of Satanta and his tribe.

On the following day about eight hundred warriors appeared before the fort and threatened to storm it, but being met with a determined front they circled around the post several times, keeping the soldiers inside until their village could move off.

Considerable fear was entertained at the fort, owing to the great number of hostile Indians who practically invested it, and it was deemed by Capt. Parker as of the utmost importance to send dispatches to Gen. Sheridan, informing him of the situation. Fort Hays was sixty-five miles distant from Fort Larned, and as the country was fairly swarming with the worst kind of "bad" Indians, Capt. Parker tried in vain to find some one who would carry the dispatches, until the request was made of Buffalo Bill. This expedition was not within Bill's line of duty, and presented dangers that would have caused the boldest man to hesitate; but finding all the couriers absolutely refusing to perform the necessary

service, he agreed to deliver the message, provided he could select the horse that he wanted to ride. Of course this requirement was readily assented to, and at ten o'clock at night, during a terrible storm, the brave scout set out, knowing that he had to run a very gauntlet of hostiles, who would make many sacrifices if by so doing they could lift his coveted scalp.

The profound darkness of the night afforded him some security from surprise, but his fears of riding into an Indian camp were realized when he reached Walnut Creek. A barking dog was the first intimation of his position, but this was speedily followed by several Indians pursuing him, being directed by the sounds of his horse's feet. By hard riding and good dodging, however, he eluded these, and meeting with no further mishap than being thrown over his horse's head by reason of the animal suddenly stepping into a gopher hole, he reached Fort Hays shortly after daylight and delivered the dispatches he carried before Gen. Sheridan had arisen from bed.

After delivering the message Bill went over to Hays City, where he was well acquainted, and after taking some refreshments, lay down and slept for two hours. Thinking then that Gen. Sheridan might want to ask him some questions regarding the condition of affairs at Larned, he returned to the fort and reported to him. He was somewhat astonished to find that Gen. Sheridan was as anxious to send a dispatch to Ft. Dodge, ninety-five miles distant, as Capt. Parker had been to communicate with his superior at Ft. Hays, and more surprised was he to find that of the numerous couriers and scouts at the fort not one could be induced to carry the General's dispatch, though the sum of five hundred dollars was offered for the service.

Seeing the quandary in which Gen. Sheridan was placed, Bill addressed that official and said :

"Well, General, I'll go over to the hotel and take a little more rest, and if by four o'clock you have not secured some one to carry your dispatches I will undertake to do it."

The General replied: "I don't like to ask so much of you, for I know you are tired, but the matter is of great importance and some one must perform the trip. I'll give you a fresh horse and the best at the Fort if you'll undertake it."

"All right, General, I'll be ready at four o'clock," responded Bill, and he then went over to the hotel, but meeting with many friends and the "irrigating" being good, he obtained only the rest that gay companionship affords.

At the appointed time Bill was ready, and receiving the dispatches at the hands of Gen. Sheridan he mounted his horse and rode away for Ft. Dodge.

After his departure there was much debate among the scouts who bade him good bye respecting the probability of his getting through, for the Indians were thick along the whole route, and only a few days before had killed three couriers and several settlers.

Bill continued his ride all night, meeting with no interruption, and by daylight the next morning he had reached Saw-Log Crossing, on Pawnee Fork, which was seventy-five miles from Ft. Hays. A company of colored cavalry under Major Cox was stationed here, and it being on the direct route to Ft. Dodge, Bill carried a letter with him from Gen. Sheridan requesting Major Cox to furnish him with a fresh horse upon his arrival there. This the Major did, so after partaking of a good breakfast, Bill took his remount and continued on to Dodge, which point he gained at ten o'clock in the morning, making the ninety-five miles in just eighteen hours from the time of starting.

The commanding officer at Ft. Dodge, after receiving the dispatches, remarked :

"I am very glad to see you, Cody, and I'll tell you that the trip just made is one of the most fortunate I know of. It is almost a miracle how you got through without having your body filled as full of holes as a pepper box. The Indians are swarming all around within fifty miles of here, and to leave camp voluntarily is almost equal to committing suicide. I have been wanting to send a message to Ft. Larned for several days, but the trip is so dangerous that I can't find any one who will risk it, and I wouldn't blame the bravest man for refusing."

"Well, Major, as I didn't find any Indians between here and Hays, I think I might get through to Larned; in fact, I want to go back there and if you will furnish me with a good horse I'll try to carry your message."

"I don't think it would be policy for you to make the trip now, especially since you have done so much hard riding already. Besides, the best mount I could give you would be a government mule."

"All right, Major, I don't want the best, second best is good enough for me, so trot out your mule. I'll take a little nap and in the meantime have your hostler slick up the mule so he can slide through with me like a greased thunderbolt should the reds jump us." \*

Bill then went off, and after "liquidating" in true Western style, lay down in the Major's quarters where he slept soundly until nearly five o'clock in the evening, when, having replenished his canteen, he mounted the patient mule and set out for Ft. Larned, which was sixty-five miles east of Ft. Dodge.

After proceeding as far as Coon Creek, which was nearly half way, Bill dismounted for the purpose of get-



ting a drink of water. While stooping down the mule got frightened at something and jerked loose, nor did the stupid animal stop to consider how essential his service was to his rider, for he at once set off in a trot down the creek. In vain did Bill coax the mule with promises of oats and green pastures; the stupid descendant of Balaam's admonisher could not be fooled with that sort of flattery, and the chagrined and weary scout had to follow in the rear, hoping that the animal would step on the loosened reins and thus check himself. But mile after mile did the dismounted and now infuriated scout follow that irritating mule. Time and again did he decide to shoot the tantalizing animal, but the decision did not prevail against his better reason; for though useless as a conveyance the mule still carried the saddle and bridle and it were better to make him bear the burden of these to Ft. Larned than attempt to carry them himself.

Thus the two traveled in the direction of Ft. Larned all night, both keeping in the main road despite the danger which it threatened. In the morning just as the sun was peeping over the hazy hilltops Bill and the mule reached a high knoll at the bottom of which lay the fort. "Now," said the scout to himself, "I'm going to manage the rest of this journey, in as much as it is less than half a mile long," and with this he raised his gun with vengeful deliberation and fired a slug into the rear abutments of that incomparably malicious mule. One shot did not afford the complete satisfaction he desired, and it was really grateful to him to see the animal die so slowly. So much sin required a dreadful amount of atonement, and while the mule was in the atoning business it was expedient that he should do as much of it as possible. So died the ass that looked back with scorn, and no man knoweth

how much evil perished with him ; yea, even unto this day knoweth no man.

After reaching Larned—carrying the bridle and saddle himself—Buffalo Bill spent several hours in refreshing sleep, and when he awakened he found Gen. Hazen trying to induce some of the couriers to take his dispatches to Gen. Sheridan, at Ft. Hays. Having been warmly and very justly praised for the long and perilous rides he had just completed, Bill again proffered his services to perform the trip. At first Gen. Hazen refused to despatch him on the mission, saying, “This is like riding a free horse to death ; you have already ridden enough to kill any ordinary man, and I don’t think it would be treating you properly to permit you to make this additional journey.”

But when evening came and no other volunteer could be engaged, as a matter of last resort Bill was given a good horse and the dispatches entrusted to him for transmission. It was after nightfall when he started on this last trip and by daylight the next morning he was in Ft. Hays, where he delivered the dispatches. Gen. Sheridan was profoundly astonished to see Bill before him again in so short a time, and after being informed of his wonderful riding during the three days, the General pronounced it a feat that was never equaled, and even now Gen. Sheridan maintains that no other man could accomplish the same distance under similar circumstances. To this day the rides here described stand on record as the most remarkable ever made. They aggregated three hundred and fifty-five miles in fifty-eight riding hours, or an average of more than six miles an hour including an enforced walk of thirty-five miles. When it is considered that all this distance was made during the night time and through a country full of hostile Indians, without a road to follow or a

bridge to cross the streams, the feat appears too incredulous for belief were it not for the most indisputable evidence, easily attainable, which makes disbelief impossible.

---

### CHAPTER XIII.

GEN. SHERIDAN was so favorably impressed by the self-sacrificing spirit and marvelous endurance of Buffalo Bill, and being already acquainted with his reputation as a brave man and superior fighter, that he called the noted scout to his headquarters directly after receiving Major Hazen's dispatches, and said :

"Cody, I have ordered the Fifth Cavalry to proceed against the Dog Soldier Indians who are now terrorizing the Republican River district, and as the campaign will be a very important one I want a first-class man to guide the expedition. From my brief acquaintance with you I am convinced that you are the person best suited for this service. I have therefore decided to appoint you guide and also chief of scouts of the command. I hope the place will be acceptable to you, for it is particularly desirable that the very best guide and scout should fill this position, and I am frank to say I have thorough confidence in your abilities."

Giving his big sombrero a careless whirl on his left hand, Bill answered in his usual indifferent manner :

"I thank you, General, for this compliment ; I am always ready to execute your orders, and if you consider me the best man for the place, why, then, I'm off without ceremony."

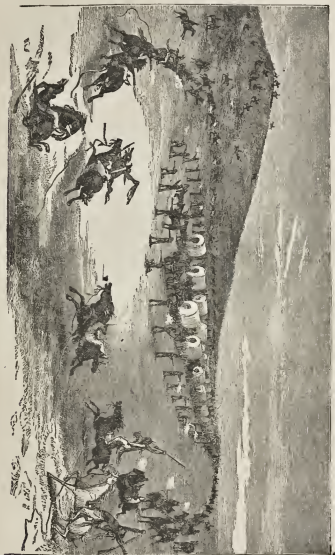
Only two days before this occurrence a body of twenty scouts, under Gen. Forsythe, had returned from the Republican river, where they had been engaged in one of the most desperate battles ever fought with the Indians. The original force of the scouts was fifty men, but being corraled by five hundred Indians on the Arikaree they had to fight this overpowering number from breastworks made of their dead mules for a period of six days. In order to sustain life they fed on the bodies of their dead animals, and when at last relieved by a detachment of cavalry under Col. Carpenter, there were only twenty of the original number left, the others having been killed outright or died from neglected wounds.

On the third of October, nearly a week after Buffalo Bill's appointment, the Fifth Cavalry arrived at Ft. Hays, where he was directly introduced to the officers and it was but a short time before he had won the friendship and admiration of them all.

In two days after their arrival the regiment was put upon the march, going by the most direct route toward the infested country. The transportation facilities comprised seventy-five six mule wagons, with a full complement of ambulances, the whole outfit when stretched out on the prairie making a caravan most imposing in appearance.

During the first four days of marching no Indians were seen and nothing occurred beyond the usual incidents of camp-life; but on the evening of October 10th, as the command was preparing to go into camp on the Saline river, when all the horses were unsaddled and the wagons corraled, the regiment was surprised by several hundred Indians who rushed down from neighboring hills upon the unprepared expedition and created great excitement. A cordon of men was quietly thrown around the

wagons to protect the camp and afford time for the troops to get their horses ready and mount. The Indians cir-



"Hi-yi-yip-yah."—The Attack.

clad around the bustling command, assuming various attitudes on their ponies and shooting at the same time, but

they were met with such an effective fire from the cordon that they retreated, leaving several dead bodies on the field. Buffalo Bill was the first man to get his horse in readiness, and mounting in advance of all the rest, led the van several hundred yards in pursuing the Indians, two of whom he killed and wounded the horse of another. Feeling safe from attack now, the regiment returned to camp, intending to follow the trail made by the attacking party early the next morning.

It was scarcely daylight when the command was put in motion, following the trail sharply, which led to the South Fork of Solomon river, where it scattered. Here the expedition went into camp again, and as it was scarcely yet three o'clock, P. M., Col. Royal requested Bill to take a short circuit over the prairie and try to kill a few buffaloes, as their fresh meat supply was almost exhausted.

"All right," responded Bill, "send a wagon along with me to haul in the carcasses."

"It is not a custom of mine to count profits before beginning business. Kill your game first, and then I'll send out the wagons," the Colonel replied.

Without saying anything more, Bill mounted his horse and rode away toward the north, unaccompanied. After an absence of nearly two hours, some of the soldiers discerned a number of moving things, evidently advancing toward them. Closer and closer came the singular objects, until at last there was discovered a horseman, riding in the rear of six large terror-stricken buffaloes. In another moment the animals had charged directly into camp, where they were shot down by Bill.

Col. Royal, hearing the agitation outside his tent, rushed up to Bill, who he discovered was the cause of the excitement, and vigorously embellishing his language,

inquired by what authority he had aroused so much confusion in the camp.

In a most lugubriously penitential way Bill replied :

"I didn't mean any harm, Colonel; but as you wouldn't send out a wagon to haul in my game, I thought it would be an accommodation to you if I made the buffaloes furnish their own conveyance. Allow me to present you with some choice tongues."

The Colonel could not face this ingenious reply, and his anger was at once succeeded by a hearty laugh; nor did he refuse the buffalo tongues proffered him by the seemingly reckless hunter.

The expedition resumed its march on the following day, but reached Buffalo Tank on Saline river without meeting any more Indians. Here the command was turned over to Gen. E. A. Carr who had been sent out from Ft. Hays with the Forsythe scouts. Upon proceeding to Beaver Creek a large, fresh Indian trail was discovered, which being followed for a distance of eight miles brought about two hundred Indians in view, who occupied a position on the bluffs. Company M was ordered forward, which being commanded by an impetuous and daring French Lieutenant named Schinosky, the Indians were driven over the bluffs for more than a mile. Suddenly they were reinforced and company M. found itself fighting over four hundred red-skins without the least protection. It looked for a short while as if there were no escape from the murderous fire poured upon them by the Indians. Buffalo Bill hearing the rapid firing over the bluffs, knew there was desperate work being done, and he sped away in advance of the main command which was hurrying up to Schinosky's assistance. Gaining the environment, he shot two Indians and then wheeling back he returned to headquarters and so accu-

rately described the position of the savages that Gen. Carr moved two companies so as to surround the enemy, when a combined attack was made with such fury that the battle was soon ended.

The Indians being repulsed fell back with the soldiers pursuing until a second force of about six hundred warriors came into view, who had been in reserve to protect their village, while the others deployed to bring the soldiers into an ambush. But the cavalry force was much greater than the Indians had anticipated, and after making two insignificant charges precipitately retreated. Night was now rapidly approaching and Gen. Carr ordered the tired soldiers into camp, where a good rest was necessary for the movements of the morrow.

On the following day the expedition raised camp at an early hour and taking up the trail where they left it at the village, pushed forward so rapidly that about three o'clock they sighted a large force of Indians who turned back the moment they were discovered and gave battle. But they fought very shy, their purpose being to check the cavalry advance so as to permit their village to escape. Finding that a battle front would not serve their purpose, they set the dry prairie grass on fire, but it was too short to burn rapidly. A running fight continued until the occupants of the village had abandoned all their more cumbersome materials, such as lodge-poles, kettles, robes, bedding, etc. They now traveled much more rapidly, so that the troops rarely came within gun-shot distance.

The pursuit continued for three days until the Indians had scattered so badly that it was impossible for an army to follow them any longer.

Having abandoned pursuit of the Dog Soldier Indians the expedition set out for the headwaters of Beaver Creek.



After traveling about thirty-five miles Gen. Carr rode forward until he overtook Buffalo Bill, who as guide and chief of scouts, was riding considerably in advance of the command, and addressing him said :

“Cody, all the Forsyth scouts declare you are going in the wrong direction, and also that we are not likely to strike any water to-day by proceeding on this route ; that if you should strike any of the branches of the Beaver you would certainly find them dry at this season.”



Beaver Creek—the Trapper's Elysian.

Bill answered : “I've been over this country several times, General, and notwithstanding what the other scouts say, I think we will find plenty of good water within eight miles of here, and that we are making directly for the point you wish to reach.”

“All right ; but remember that the matter is too serious to admit of mistakes ; the responsibility is now all your own,” and so saying General Carr rode back to the command.

After marching seven miles further the Forsyth scouts again declared that they were wandering in the wrong direction, but notwithstanding their forebodings, within the distance asserted by Bill a beautiful stream of water was discovered purling along the ravines, almost hidden by the trees which lined its banks. A level, grassy spot having been selected, about four o'clock in the evening everything was put in preparation for camping in an enemy's country. This stream, which was a branch of Beaver river, having no location on the then existing maps, was named by Gen. Carr Cody's Creek in honor of his distinguished guide, a name by which it is now known on all the topographical maps of Kansas.

On the following morning camp was broken early and the march toward Beaver Creek resumed. Buffalo Bill, as was his custom, had ridden nearly a quarter of a mile ahead of the command, and first striking the Beaver at a wide point was riding along the bank seeking a safe crossing. As he emerged from a thick covert in a bend of the creek he suddenly confronted a party of Indians who fired on him, shooting his horse dead. Bill was taken by such complete surprise that as his horse fell he went tumbling headlong into a thicket, from which it took some moments to extricate himself. As he arose another volley of bullets came zipping into his retreat, but bringing his faithful rifle into position he shot one of the Indian's ponies and held the whole party at bay until the command reached him. Company I, under Lieutenant Brady, was sent in pursuit of the Indians, and being accompanied by Bill, who had been furnished with another horse, a lively battle was soon precipitated. But the Indians beat a retreat, followed by the soldiers, who succeeded in killing several and capturing a large quantity of Indian equipage.

The expedition continued beating the skirts of Beaver Creek for some days, but finding no more Indians, and supplies running short, Gen. Carr ordered the command to Fort Wallace, where it remained for several days.

During this period of quiet, Bill amused himself by pursuing his favorite sport, buffalo and antelope shooting. Having met with uniform success on these hunts, three of the other scouts concluded to accompany him, and the party, all being excellent marksmen, a wagon was given them to haul in their game. The quartette of hunters had proceeded seven or eight miles from the fort, when they discovered a large herd of buffaloes, running rapidly toward Beaver Creek. Pursuit was, of course, given, and the sport became so exciting that the hunters took no concern or thought of danger until they discovered about fifty Indians bearing down on them, shutting off a retreat toward Wallace.

The boys saw they were in for a hard fight, and Bill, being recognized as a boss fighter and stayer, was looked to for advice.

"Make for that ravine; if we reach that in time we can stand them off for a while anyhow."

This was his first order, and it was obeyed with such alacrity that the party not only reached the ravine, but had also dismounted in time to send such a destructive volley into the charging Indians that four were unseated. This checked the advance, but only for a moment, when they again came pouring down upon the hunters, yelling like the materialized spirits of hades. But again the repeating guns of the four brave hunters played upon them so disastrously that the Indians fell back. Rallying, however, after a council of several minutes, they made another charge, coming so close this time that one of the hunters was wounded and three of their horses

were killed. But the attack was again successfully repulsed, with such loss to the Indians that they retreated, and riding rapidly due north were seen no more.

The four hunters had reason to rejoice at the victory they had won, but though they had only three sound horses and a wounded companion, the hunt was not yet abandoned. Another herd of buffaloes being found, the wounded man remained in the wagon, while the others set off after the game, and killed as many as their means of transportation justified. Having now succeeded as both fighters and hunters, the party returned to the fort with trophies of their adventures and received well-deserved compliments from Gen. Carr for their deeds.

---

#### CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER leaving Fort Wallace, Gen. Carr's forces were ordered to winter along the Canadian river, in which portion of the country Indians were occasionally committing depredations. Proceeding, therefore, to Fort Lyon, the command was duly equipped for the approaching season, and then set out, intending to overtake and consolidate with Gen. Penrose, who had departed toward Camp Supply three weeks previously. Buffalo Bill was especially anxious for the consolidation, because Wild Bill, his old friend, was Gen. Penrose's chief of scouts.

Winter was now near at hand, and reaching Freeze Out Cañon, they found the snow so deep that it was almost impossible to march through it. To overcome this obstacle the command, as far as practicable, was put to work shoveling and beating a roadway for the teams, which

were brought through only with the greatest difficulty.

After a very long march, full of hardships and sufferings, Gen. Penrose's camp was found on the Palodora in a most distracted condition. Their provisions had long been exhausted and life had been sustained by eating the carcasses of their draught animals. After a liberal distribution of rations among the famishing men, Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill covenanted together for a good time of their own, to accomplish which they tapped a beer train which was being driven through by a party of Mexicans to Camp Evans to trade to the soldiers at that point, which was only twelve miles from the Palodora station.

Indulging to their full capacity, the soldiers were not forgotten, and there was hilarity in camp of the most inspiriting character, changing all factious grumbling into a hearty good time, in this sense proving a positive benefit to the two suffering commands. Arriving at Camp Evans, Wild Bill was despatched to Camp Supply, two hundred miles distant, and the armies settled in temporary quarters to await his return. The trip was made in an almost incredibly short time, his celerity being due to orders from Supply informing Gens. Penrose and Carr of Black Kettle's depredations on the Wachita, and ordering them to pursue him. Following out these instructions the consolidated commands moved rapidly along the Cimarron until they discovered the Indians, when a terrific battle immediately ensued. In this fight Buffalo Bill and Wild Bill did almost the work of a regiment; braver men never went into an action, both fighting as though they were invulnerable.

In the fury and rout which followed the first charge Wild Bill gave chase to Black Kettle, head chief of the Cheyennes engaged, and overtaking the fleeing red war-

rior, stabbed him to death. But the accomplishment of this heroic action would have cost him his own life had not Buffalo Bill ridden with impetuous daring into the very midst of fully fifty Indians who had surrounded Wild Bill intent on either his capture or death. These two daring and intrepid scouts plunged furiously into the midst of the Indians, each with a revolver in either hand, and literally carved their way through the surging mass of red skins, leaving a furrow of dead Indians in their wake. Such fighting, such riding, and such marvelous intrepidity combined, were doubtless never equaled, and if but this act alone could be credited to the valor of Wild Bill and Buffalo Bill their names would deserve inscription on Fame's enduring monument.

Having broken the strength of the Cheyennes, killed their famous chief and captured so many of their best warriors, Gen. Carr, who was chief in command of the consolidated forces, returned toward Camp Supply, but owing to heavy snows it was considered more advisable to pitch their tents on the Canadian river, especially as the country abounded with game.

During this latter encampment a serious feud was created between fifteen Mexican scouts with Gen. Penrose's command and an equal number of American scouts engaged with Gen. Carr. What provoked this nationalized quarrel was Buffalo Bill's appointment as chief of the combined force of scouts, with Wild Bill as assistant. The quarrel increased in bitterness from hour to hour until at length one day, while the opposing forces were congregated before the sutler's store, the long anticipated fight was precipitated by Buffalo Bill knocking one of the insulting Mexicans an honest furlong. A moment after he was attacked by the entire force of Mexican scouts, whom he fought with great success, but was not



BUFFALO BILL IN CLOSE QUARTERS.





alone, for Wild Bill soon put in his oar, followed by the other American scouts, and for nearly half an hour there was the best imitation of the row at Tim Finnigan's wake ever attempted on American soil. Every man did his level best and the circus was consequently a big success—for the American scouts.

The command remained in camp along the Canadian until March had approached, when seeing there were no prospects of finding any more turbulent Indians, Gen. Carr moved up to Ft. Lyon. Reaching this post, Buffalo Bill obtained a thirty days' leave of absence to visit St. Louis where his family was then temporarily living. He rode to Sheridan, distant one hundred and forty miles, on a government mule, and taking the train there reached St. Louis in due time, where his reception was very cordial.

Upon his return to Ft. Lyon, Gen. Carr immediately accosted him as follows:

"Cody, you have returned at a most opportune time, for your services are just now badly needed. During our stay here several of our best horses have been stolen, and though I have sent out several parties, hoping to capture the thieves or recover some of our stock, not one of them has met with the least success. Now I want you to make an effort."

"All right, General, I'll try."

This was the only reply returned by Bill, but he at once sought those who had been after the thieves, in order to question them regarding the trails, if any had been found. Bill Green, an old scout who had accompanied parties sent out by Gen. Carr, informed him that he had discovered a trail leading by Old Fort Lyon, but could not follow it on account of the high grass it led through.

On the following morning Bill started after the thieves,

accompanied by Green, Jack Farley and another scout whose name cannot be recalled. The party was led by Green to the spot where high grass had prevented him from following it further, and then Bill began a searching investigation for hoof prints. These he found, and taking up the trail where Green had lost it, followed on for several miles until he reached a thick clump of timber, where he found numerous evidences of a recent corral of horses. But singularly enough, not a single hoof print could be discovered leading in any direction from the corral.

"Well, boys," said Bill, "we are after experienced horse thieves; that I know, because of the perfect manner in which their trail is covered. We've got to divide up here and each man make a five-mile circuit, coming together again at this place to report."

The men immediately diverged in search of the hidden trail, which Bill found in the sand hills, and discovered that the thieves were moving with eight horses and four mules. The party having met again as agreed, they started out on the rediscovered trail and followed it without difficulty to Denver, reaching a point four miles from that town on Thursday.

"We have got to stop here," remarked Bill, "because I know that the thieves are in Denver, and as Saturday is the great horse sales day in that place, we will wait here until Friday night so as to avert suspicion, and catch them when the horses are put up for sale."

Early on Saturday morning Bill rode into Denver with his three assistants and put up at the Elephant Corral, overlooking the yard where all the auction horse sales were made. After taking a survey of his position he walked out into the yard, where he soon had the pleasure of seeing one of the old packers in Gen. Carr's command

ride into the corral on a racing mule, belonging to Lieut. Forbush, and leading another. Bill waited for several minutes, expecting to see the thief's confederate put in an appearance, but as the mule was being bid on action could no longer be deferred.

Pushing through the crowd, Bill approached the thief, who, recognizing him, attempted to escape, but the keen-eyed scout divined his intention, and seizing him, cried:

"Stop, or I'll have to kill you here; come along with me."

This action was a surprise to those attending the auction, and they demanded an explanation, which being given, the thief, whose name was Williams, was taken off three miles down the Platte river. Here, having found a dense thicket suited for their purposes, Bill prepared a noose with which he intended to hang Williams if he refused to reveal the whereabouts of his confederates.

Seeing that his captors were in earnest, Williams made a complete disclosure of his operations, telling the party that he had but one partner in the horse-stealing enterprise, and that he might be found at a deserted cabin about four miles further down the river. The rope was now taken down from the limb which suspended it, and taking Williams along with them, the party proceeded on down the river until the place they had been directed to was reached. At the moment Green discovered the old cabin, Bill's alert eyes fell on ten head of the stolen horses, all tethered and grazing close about the house. As the party rode up, the occupant, hearing unusual noises, came to the door with pistol in hand. But Bill's rifle instantly covered him and the command, "Throw up your hands, Bevens, or I'll kill you," made the thief yield at once.

This confederate of Williams', whose name was Bevins, had also been a packer in Gen. Carr's expedition and was well-known to Buffalo Bill, and, it may be added, he also knew Bill, and it was this mutual recognition which convinced the thief how useless it would be to make any show of resistance.

A search of the old cabin resulted in the recovery of several saddles, lariets, blankets, and two Henry rifles. All the recovered horses and mules were then tied together, and with Williams and Bevins well secured, the party returned to Denver. Passing one night in that place they started out for Ft. Lyon, making seventeen miles the first day and camping at Cherry Creek.

Notwithstanding it was late in April the weather was very cold, and a big fire was made up before which all but a single guard lay down to sleep.

At one o'clock in the morning it began to snow quite hard and an increase of covering was necessary. The prisoners were apparently sound asleep, and there being a constant guard it was not deemed necessary to tie them. At three o'clock, while Farley was on watch, Bevins, seizing upon the opportunity, struck the guard a violent blow and leaping over the fire sped swiftly away. The noise awakened Cody just as Williams started to join his companion, but Bill knocked him down and then sent an ineffectual shot after the escaping thief. In the flight Bevins accidentally dropped one of his shoes and was therefore barefooted, a condition which put him at great disadvantage in the pursuit which followed.

Leaving Williams in charge of Farley and the other scout, Bill and Green quickly saddled their horses and set out after Bevins. They found his trail hard to follow in the darkness, but had no difficulty after daylight, owing to the imprints in the snow. After going several

miles the blood stains clearly showed that the fugitive's unprotected foot was being lacerated by the sharp stones and prickly-pears, but notwithstanding this he was making fast time.

The pursuers had traveled rapidly for more than twelve miles before they came in sight of the fleeing thief, on a ridge, near the Platte river. Bill commanded him to halt, under pain of being shot, and knowing who was handling the rifle drawn on him, Bevins at once sat down and began pulling the sharp needles from his terribly lacerated feet. Taking their recaptured prisoner back to the Cherry Creek branch (Bill allowing Bevins to ride his own horse out of compassion for the painful condition of his feet), the party took up their march again toward Ft. Lyon.

On the following night Williams made his escape while the scout whose name is not remembered was on duty, and though earnest pursuit was given he was not recaptured.

With the remaining prisoner the party reached Ft. Lyon, and after turning over the recovered stock to Gen. Carr, Bevins was placed in charge of the civil authorities. He was confined in a log jail at Boggs' ranch, from which he escaped in a few days, just as Bill had predicted. In 1872, however, Bevins was captured again, together with several other notorious outlaws of his gang who had been robbing stage coaches in the country north of the Union Pacific railroad, and he is now serving a life sentence in the Nebraska penitentiary.

## CHAPTER XV.

It was only a few days after Buffalo Bill's arrival at Ft. Lyon with the stolen horses and his prisoner, that the Fifth cavalry was ordered to proceed to Ft. McPherson, in Nebraska, for operations in the department of the Platte. The command prepared for the march at once, Bill taking the advance and maintaining it throughout the entire journey. After marching several days the regiment approached the valley drained by the north fork of Beaver creek where Cody discovered fresh and numerous Indian signs from which he estimated there were not less than four hundred lodges, or three thousand Indians, in the immediate vicinity. Riding back to Gen. Carr he requested him to halt in the valley and wait until he could reconnoitre and locate the savages. Accordingly Lieut. Ward, with twelve men, was sent out on the trail with Bill and followed it along the creek bank for a distance of twelve miles. Then leaving their horses, Bill and the Lieutenant crawled carefully to the apex of a high knoll, from which point of observation they discovered a very large Indian village not more than three miles distant, while to the left less than half a mile was an Indian hunting party riding ponies heavily laden with buffalo meat.

Examination convinced the two white men that their position was not particularly safe, as the Indians seemed to be running in every direction. Bill hastily wrote a dispatch which he gave to Lieutenant Ward, asking its immediate transmission to Gen. Carr. One of the soldiers was detailed for the purpose, but he had ridden back less than a mile when several shots were heard and soon the dispatch courier was seen riding for life around the bend of the creek, closely pursued by five Indians.

Bill and the Lieutenant, followed by the soldiers, dashed out after the red-skins and giving a well-directed volley, killed one of them and drove the others across the creek.

As the badly scared messenger came up to the party, Bill said sharply :



Buffalo Bill tries a Shot at Long Range.

“Lieutenant, give me that dispatch, I’ll carry it through,” and taking the message, he rode rapidly toward the regiment, but had proceeded only a short distance when he discovered a dozen Indians carrying buffalo meat on their ponies. In order to make them be-

lieve he was accompanied by a large force, Bill acted on the aggressive and delivered a shot at long range. The Indians at first showed no inclination to fight, but seeing only one man they cut loose their burdens and dashed after the bold scout. But pursuit on already jaded ponies was useless, and Bill, after drawing them as far as possible, dashed off, leaving the Indians far behind and getting safely into camp, delivered the message to Gen. Carr.

Eight companies were instantly ordered to saddle up, the other two being left in charge of the train. They rode swiftly to the relief of Lieutenant Ward, but met him returning, within three miles of camp; he reported an engagement with fifteen Indian hunters, one of whom he had killed, and wounded one pony. The companies kept straight on, however, and after going two miles further they met a force of one thousand Indians, prepared for battle, approaching up the creek.

Gen. Carr ordered an immediate charge, accompanying the order with instructions to break through the line of Indians and charge on to the village without stopping. The French Lieutenant, Schinosky, unfortunately, failed to comprehend the order, and instead of charging through with the command, vigorously attacked the Indians' left flank, where he was quickly surrounded by a large body of the enemy with every assurance of being annihilated. Gen. Carr discovered Schinosky's danger barely in time to charge back to his rescue. But in this fiasco several soldiers and horses were killed and the Indian village given time to get so far away that further pursuit was impracticable that day, which was already nearly spent.

Couriers had been sent back, ordering the detail of two companies to follow up with the supply train, but as they



did not appear it was gravely feared that they had been surrounded by Indians and were either besieged or had fallen victims to a terrible fate. It became necessary therefore to return to the camp. Singularly enough, this order had been also misunderstood, and the night was spent in Beaver Valley.

On the following day pursuit was renewed and kept up for two days, when a war party was again discovered by an advance company, and some lively fighting ensued. The Indians were now pressed so hard that they threw away all their camp utensils and equipage and left behind them several head of exhausted ponies. As a last resort, the village separated, taking so many different trails that pursuit was given over and the command went on to Fort McPherson, to prepare for another expedition along the Republican river.

While encamped at McPherson the command was reinforced by three hundred Pawnee scouts, under command of Major Frank J. North, one of the best executive officers, as well also as one of the bravest men that ever carved a route through the great West. In this connection I cannot help indulging what I know will be a pardonable degression, in order that some of the qualities of this brave officer may be at least alluded to.

Major North, though born in New York, March 10, 1840, is nevertheless a thoroughly Western man in all his training. His father removed from New York to Nebraska, settling near Columbus, in the winter of 1856-57, and directly thereafter was frozen to death at Emigrant Crossing, on Big Pappillion Creek, while trying to secure wood for his suffering family.

Shortly after the death of his father young North joined a party of trappers, McMurray, Glass and Messenger, and began taking beaver and otter on the tribu-

taries of Platte river, but meeting with indifferent success, returned to Columbus and engaged in anything that promised remuneration, as the family was almost entirely dependent on him for support.

In 1860, being now twenty years of age, Frank procured employment with Agent DePuy, at the Pawnee Indian Reservation. Here, while performing his other duties, he acquired such a thorough knowledge of the



Maj. Frank J. North.

Pawnee language that in the following year he was engaged as interpreter by Mr. Rudy, son-in-law of the Indian Commissioner.

At the breaking out of the Sioux war in 1864, Gen. Curtis, commanding the Sixteenth and Twelfth Kansas Cavalry, commissioned Mr. North to organize the Pawnee scouts, who were not only friendly to the Govern-

ment but inveterate foes of the Sioux. Under this authority he enlisted seventy-seven young warriors and organized a company of which he was made First Lieutenant. This was the first enlistment ever made of Indians for regular Government service, and while Lieut. North is entitled to this honor, it is with regret I have to add that he never received a cent for his services, neither did his Indian warriors receive any pay, though they were promised by Gen. Curtis, upon enlistment, that they should receive the same as cavalrymen.

In the latter part of October following, acting under orders from Gen. Custer, Lieut. North enlisted one hundred more Pawnee warriors, who were then equipped like the regular cavalry, and North was commissioned Captain.

On the thirteenth of January, 1865, the company was mustered into service, the delay being due to difficulties regarding their acceptance by the Government, but when regularly put on the muster rolls Capt. North began active operations. Learning of depredations being made by the Sioux in the neighborhood of Julesburg, he took forty of his Pawnees and proceeded directly to the scene of trouble. On the route to Julesburg he was horrified to find the bodies of no less than fourteen white persons, pilgrims on their way to Pike's Peak, mutilated beyond recognition; their scalps torn off, tongues cut out, legs cut open and bodies full of arrows. Julesburg had also been attacked and the garrison was on the point of yielding when rescued. North now pushed after the Sioux with all possible speed, and meeting with twenty-eight of the incarnate devils, he fell upon them with such irresistible force that not a single Sioux in the party escaped his vengeance.

These Indians whom North had thus annihilated were

a predatory band from Red Cloud's forces, and had done an inestimable amount of damage through the section they had invaded. Only a few days previous to their disastrous meeting with Capt. North, this same party had suddenly attacked Lieutenant Collins, with fourteen men, and killed the entire party.

Shortly after this successful sortie Captain North was ordered to pursue a body of twelve Cheyennes and punish them for atrocities committed in the neighborhood of Ft. Sedgwick. Taking twenty of his Pawnees he got on the Cheyenne trail and after following it about thirty miles, came up with the enemy whom he found in line of battle. At the first volley, however, the Cheyennes fled, followed hard by Capt. North. In this pursuit the Pawnees were unable to keep up with their captain, as their horses were too badly jaded to endure extra riding; Capt. North, however, was mounted on a superior animal, and being full of desperate pluck, was determined to kill one Cheyenne at least. Looking back, at length, he saw his men fully a mile behind him, and several of them dismounted. Realizing the danger of his position, he took deliberate aim and fired at the Cheyennes, one of whom tumbled from his pony dead. At this the other Indians turned on the Captain and he was compelled to flee for his life.

The Indians rode rapidly after him, shooting constantly, until a bullet struck the Captain's horse in the side, rendering him unfit for further travel. Leaping to the ground, Captain North used his horse for a breast-work, from which he fired until the position had become too dangerous. He then started to run, but after getting several yards he remembered the two holsters on the saddle, each containing a loaded revolver, and he boldly returned for these. With these pistols he fought the

Cheyennes nearly half an hour longer, and until relieved by Lieut. Small. This fight, one of the most daring ever made, is still spoken of, and the story frequently told over and over again among Western men, who almost reverence the name of Frank J. North.

At the conclusion of the Tongue River campaign in 1865-66, the Pawnees were mustered out of service and Captain North was appointed Post Trader at the Pawnee Reservation, where he spent the winter of 1866-67.

In March following, while acting under the orders of Gen. Auger, Captain North raised a battalion of two hundred Pawnees, who were divided into four companies and taken to Fort Kearney, where they were equipped for cavalry service. He was then given a Major's commission, and with his Indian soldiers guarded construction trains on the Union Pacific Railroad until its completion to Ogden. In this service he was engaged almost constantly with depredating Sioux and Cheyennes, who descended on the construction trains at every opportunity. After the road had reached Utah, large shipments of silver were being made almost weekly, and as this precious metal was brought into stations in large bricks, which, for want of other storage, was usually piled up on and about the platforms to await shipment, Major North's Indians had also to perform the duty of guarding the precious metal.

When the road was completed, Major North retired to a ranche on Dismal River, sixty-five miles north of North Platte, where he went into the cattle raising business. He needed some quiet occupation, because of a disease—asthma—which had been slowly sapping his existence for several years and which he had lost all hope of relieving. Buffalo Bill, after his first meeting with Major North at Fort McPherson, served with him on several

campaigns, and in this service a very warm friendship sprang up between them, which led to the formation of a copartnership in the cattle ranche on Dismal River, which still continues. The firm of Cody & North is known among cattle men in every part of America; they now have seven thousand head of cattle and four hun-



Silver Bricks Awaiting Shipment.

dred head of horses, and to every one who calls at the Dismal Ranche there is a hearty, white man's welcome. Major North, aside from his reputation as an Indian fighter and brave man, is a gentleman of the most generous and noble instincts; popular with all classes, and a friend honest and honorable to the end.

Returning to the regular narrative, Buffalo Bill remained at Ft. McPherson for several days, during which time he made the acquaintance of all the officers of that post, among whom was Lieut. Geo. P. Belden, the "White Chief," whose wonderful adventures have been so graphically recited in a large work written by Gen. James S. Brisbin, U. S. A.

Belden, being a crack rifle-shot and having heard much concerning Buffalo Bill's skill, became anxious for a contest in order that the excellence of their marksmanship might be determined. It was therefore scarcely an hour after they were introduced to each other before Belden had challenged Bill for a rifle match, which was as promptly accepted. The terms and arrangements were that they should first shoot ten shots at a distance of two hundred yards, without rest, for fifty dollars a side. Following this should be another match at one hundred yards on the same terms. Buffalo Bill won the first wager on an excellent margin, but Belden brought up his averages well by winning the second match, and with this stand off the crowd of spectators pronounced them both such superior shots that neither could be beaten.

Gen. Carr, before leaving McPherson, desired to manifest his appreciation of the valuable services rendered him by Buffalo Bill, and as the command was soon to start on another long expedition, it occurred to him that it would be an honor and excellent service to the army at the same time to have Buffalo Bill appointed chief of scouts in the Department of the Platte. Accordingly Gen. Carr made the necessary recommendation to Gen. Auger who at once issued the commission, allowing Bill a large increase of pay over the amount he received as chief of scouts in the Department of Missouri. This recognition of his services greatly pleased the heroic scout,

especially as the appointment was made without his solicitation or knowledge that it was even thought of.

It was late in the summer when the command started on an expedition through the Republican river country, and the heat interfered somewhat with its progress. It was certainly an interesting, as well as laughable, sight to see Major North's Pawnees equipped for cavalry service. To quote from the autobiography of Buffalo Bill: "The Pawnee scouts were also reviewed, and it was very amusing to see them in their full regulation uniform. They had been furnished with a regular cavalry uniform, and on this parade some of them had their heavy overcoats on, others their large black hats, with all the brass accoutrements attached; some of them were minus pantaloons and only wore a breech-clout. Others wore regulation pantaloons but no shirt, and were bareheaded; others again had the seat of their pantaloons cut out, leaving only leggins; some wore brass spurs, but had neither boots nor moccasins. With all this *melange* of oddity they understood the drill remarkably well for Indians. The commands, of course, were given to them in their own language by Major North, who could talk it as well as any full blooded Pawnee."

After the expedition had been moving for several days they approached near the mouth of Beaver Creek, where, the day being far advanced, the command went into camp. A herd of the draught mules was driven down to a convenient watering place several hundred yards from the camp; as the herd was drinking, a party of fifty Sioux made a rapid descent on the herders, one of whom they shot and then stampeded the mules. Buffalo Bill instantly leaped on his horse, bare-backed, and started for the scene of trouble, regardless of Indians or thought of danger. As he dashed down through the



woods he was astonished to see the Pawnees come flying by him, whooping, and in red-hot pursuit of their implacable enemies. The Sioux had seen the men go into camp but had not the remotest suspicion that any Pawnees were present. They therefore considered it fun to make a sortie on the herd, stampede the mules and do other damage, and then flee away before the cavalry could get ready to follow them. The Pawnees, however, unlike regular soldiers, did not wait for orders, but seeing a band of Sioux their enmity overleaped the bounds of discipline and they were bound to fight, which they did over a distance of fifteen miles, killing more than a dozen of the Sioux.

After this little skirmish the expedition continued the march up Beaver and Prairie Dog rivers, but finding only small bands of apparently harmless Indians, at the end of twenty days the command returned to Ft. McPherson. This expedition, though proving of little advantage to the army, resulted most advantageously to Buffalo Bill, as it was the running fight at the mouth of the Beaver that threw into his way "Old Buckskin Joe," a horse which afterward gained great notoriety in connection with Bill's exploits.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE command under Gen. Carr did not remain long inactive at Ft. McPherson, for within one day after their return news was received of fresh depredations on Republican river, and the restless spirit of the troops, who were anxious to accomplish something more glorious than

marches and counter marches, was sufficient excuse for the General to order them into the field again.

The command moved westward up the Republican, preceded by two companies of Pawnees under Major North. Reaching Black Tail Deer Fork the expedition went into camp, but before the shadows of night had fallen, the Pawnees, who had not been heard from for some days, came riding down the winding stream toward camp, yelling their victorious exultations, and waving many reeking scalps above their heads. After they had alighted the information was speedily acquired, that Maj. North and his Pawnees had run into a foraging party of Sioux, several of whom they had killed. But a much larger body, composing in fact an extensive village, was discovered traveling northward, which being too strong for the Pawnees to attack, Maj. North had ordered a quick return to the camp for the purpose of forming a junction and entering upon a pursuit.

On the following morning the troops were put in motion, Buffalo Bill, with a squad of six Pawnees, taking the lead and going ahead far enough to warn the command, by courier, should the Indians be discovered, thereby giving ample time to prepare for a charge.

The Sioux trail was followed for two days, when, passing several dying camp fires, each showing a more recent kindling, Bill was admonished that he was rapidly gaining on the moving village. Coming, at length, to the sand hills, a careful and cautious survey discovered the Indians encamped at Summit Springs. Bill immediately posted his Pawnee squad and rode back to Gen. Carr, who was ten miles in the rear, with report of the Sioux position.

There was much bustle among the troops when the order was issued to "tighten saddles." Every cavalryman

knew what that order meant, and the Pawnees under Major North could scarcely be constrained. Everything having been put in readiness, the command pushed forward rapidly after Buffalo Bill, who led the way in a sharp gallop.

Reaching within a mile of the unsuspecting Sioux, Bill changed horses, mounting his reliable "Buckskin Joe," which had given substantial evidence of being the swiftest horse with Gen. Carr's expedition. He then told the General to follow after him and he would lead the command between the village and South Platte River, by which movement the intervening hills would enable them to approach so near as to give the Indians a complete surprise.

Buffalo Bill's suggestions were adopted, and with such success that the charge was not sounded until the entire command was within a thousand yards of the Indians, who were just preparing to move on, most of their horses being already in readiness. For a moment the Sioux seemed to be struck dumb with astonishment at beholding such an array of cavalry bearing down upon them. A few attempted to meet the charge, but only for an instant, when they wheeled and the entire village fled precipitately. But luggage and incomplete preparation impeded their flight, and ere they had gone half a mile, the troops, following Buffalo Bill, were among them, shooting right and left with terrible effect.

The pursuit continued until darkness made it impossible to longer follow the Indians, who had scattered and were leading off in every direction like a brood of young quails. The expedition went into camp along the South Platte, much exhausted by so long a chase, and though very tired, every trooper seemed anxious for the morrow.

It was nearly sunrise when "boots and saddles" was

sounded, breakfast having been disposed of at break of day. The command started in a most seasonable time, but finding that the trail was all broken up, it was deemed advisable to separate into companies, each to follow a different trail.

The company headed by Buffalo Bill struck out toward the Northwest over a route indicating the march of about one hundred Indians, and followed this for nearly two days. At a short bend of the Platte a new trail was discovered leading into the one the company was following, and at this point it was evident that a junction had been made. Further along the evidence of a reunion of the entire village increased, and now it began to appear that further pursuit would be somewhat hazardous, owing to the largely increased force of Indians. But there were plenty of brave men in the company and nearly all were anxious to meet the Indians, however great their numbers might be. This anxiety was appeased on the third day, when a party of about six hundred Sioux was discovered riding in close ranks near the Platte. The discovery was mutual and there was immediate preparation for battle on both sides. Owing to the overwhelming force of the Indians, extreme caution became necessary, and instead of advancing boldly the soldiers sought advantageous ground. Seeing this, the Indians became convinced that there had been a division in Gen. Carr's command and that the company before them was a fragmentary part of the expedition; they therefore assumed the aggressive, charging the soldiers who retired to a ravine to act on the defensive. The attack was made with such caution that the soldiers fell back without undue haste, and had ample opportunity to secure their horses in the natural pit, which was a ravine that during wet seasons formed a branch of the Platte.

After circling about the soldiers with the view of measuring their full strength, the Indians, comprehending how small was the number, made a desperate charge from two sides, getting so near that several of the soldiers were badly wounded by arrows. But the Indians were received with such withering fire that they fell back in confusion, leaving twenty of their warriors on the ground. Another charge resulted like the first, with heavy loss to the red skins, which so discouraged them that they drew off and held a long council. After discussing the situation among themselves for more than an hour they separated, one body making off as though they intended to leave, but Buffalo Bill understood their motions too well to allow the soldiers to be deceived.

The Indians that remained again began to ride in a circle around the soldiers, but maintaining a safe distance, out of rifle range. Seeing an especially well mounted Indian riding at the head of a squad, passing around in the same circle more than a dozen times, Buffalo Bill decided to take his chances for dismounting the chief (as he proved to be), and to accomplish his purpose he crawled on his hands and knees three hundred yards up the ravine, stopping at a point he considered would be in range of the Indian when he should again make the circuit. His judgment proved correct, for soon the Indian was seen loping his pony through the grass, and as he slackened speed to cross the ravine, Bill rose up and fired, the aim being so well taken that the chief tumbled to the ground while his horse, after running a few hundred yards, approached the soldiers, one of whom ran out and caught hold of the long lariat attached to the bridle, and thus secured the animal. Bill returned to the company, all of whom had witnessed his feat of killing an Indian at a range of fully four hundred yards, and by

general consent the horse of his victim was given to him.

This Indian killed by Bill proved to be Tall Bull, one of the most cunning and able chiefs the Sioux ever had, and his death so affected the Indians that they at once retreated without further attempt to dislodge the soldiers.



women would have been under like circumstances, she regarded him with special favor, and es-

Some days after this occurrence Gen. Carr's command was brought together again and in an engagement with the Sioux, more than three hundred warriors and a large number of ponies were captured, together with several hundred



Death of Tall Bull.

squaws, among the latter being Tall Bull's widow, who told with pathetic interest how the Prairie Chief\* had killed her husband. But instead of being moved with hatred against him, as most civilized

teemed it quite an honor that her husband, a great warrior himself, should have met his death at the hands of so mighty and celebrated a person as the Prairie Chief. She ever afterward regarded Buffalo Bill with a feeling akin to tender affection, or as near that sentiment as an Indian squaw could be expected to approach, and invariably availed herself of every opportunity to show her esteem for him.

\*Buffalo Bill is known among all Northern Indians as the Prairie Chief.

The expedition having succeeded in thoroughly breaking the power of the Sioux, Gen. Carr went into barracks at Ft. Sedgwick, where the soldiers, elated with the trophies of their success, indulged in merrymaking until a jollier camp was never seen than that around Jule's old ranche. One special feature of this glorious celebration was horse racing, in which Buffalo Bill backed his new acquisition, which, in honor of his dead owner, Bill generously called Tall Bull, against all the horses of the regiment, and put up all his available cash, even to the last paper five-cent piece. His winnings amounted to just seven hundred dollars in cash, three jack knives, two scalps and a two-stringed fiddle.

---

## CHAPTER XVII.

GEN. CARR having received a leave of absence, when his command reached Ft. McPherson Gen. W. H. Emory took charge of the Republican River District, and the Fifth Cavalry went into regular quarters.

Buffalo Bill being assured that the command would remain at McPherson as a reward for the long and severe labor performed by the regiment, had a house built, and then sent for his wife and daughter, who were in St. Louis, to come to him, as McPherson would now be their home.

Two years passed without the occurrence of any event of special interest connected with Buffalo Bill, his time being spent in hunting and home occupations.

In the winter of 1869-70 Bill accompanied two parties of wealthy Englishmen upon a hunting expedition, in

which he acquitted himself with such credit and satisfaction that upon returning home the Englishmen sounded his praises so earnestly that letters began to pour in from other wealthy gentlemen of England propounding hundreds of questions appertaining to hunting on the great Western prairies.

During the visit of the Englishmen, a horse race was arranged at Ft. McPherson, to take place between Buffalo Bill, who was to ride Tall Bull, and a cavalryman who owned what he considered a fast horse. There was a singular feature about this race, however, which was a stipulation that while running Bill should leap from his horse to the ground and then remount again eight consecutive times before completing the course, which was one mile in length. His advantage seemed so great that every one bet on the cavalryman; in fact, few believed Bill was circus man enough to perform this feat, and none believed it less than the Englishmen. But the race was run according to programme, and Bill won it easily, together with several hundred dollars from his foreign guests. Leaping and remounting from a running horse is an act as easy for Buffalo Bill to perform as it is for a professional bareback rider to assume a standing position on a moving horse.

In the spring of 1870 a party of Indians made a descent on a stock ranche near McPherson and succeeded in running off twenty-one head of horses, and coming closer to the post during night, also got away with another fast horse owned by Cody, which he called Powder Face.

The moment this loss was discovered, Company I was ordered to pursue the thieves, Buffalo Bill being sent with the soldiers as trailer. An early start was made and so fast did the company move that they covered sixty



miles before sundown. An encampment was made within four miles of Red Willow Creek, on the banks of which Bill expressed his earnest belief that the Indian thieves were camped. But to verify his suspicions he made an investigation, unaccompanied, during the night, and sure enough he found them, with guard posted, about four miles from the company's camp.

Having located the Indians, he returned to the camp and posting the soldiers, arranged matters for an attack



Two Indians at One Shot.

before daylight on the following morning. His programme was carried out with such success that the cavalry, which he headed, rode with shout, pistol and saber into the Indian village just as the gray dawn was appearing. Sharp work succeeded, in which there was a rapid decimation of the red race. Several Indians, however, succeeded in mounting ponies and a pursuit ensued in which Buffalo Bill took a specially interesting part, as

his Powder Face carried one of the fleeing thieves. During this interesting race Bill ran down two Indians who were riding the same pony, and by a skillful shot sent a rifle ball through both their bodies, felling them to the ground still locked together. But Powder Face being the swiftest horse among the cavalry, Bill was compelled, with chagrin and mortification, to see the thief who rode him disappear in the distance.

The pursuit terminated with excellent results, for all the stolen horses were recovered except Powder Face, and more than a dozen Indian scalps were brought back as a compensation for that loss—and they all belonged to Bill, too.

Soon after this most successful surprise an expedition was organized to again penetrate the Republican river country, the command being entrusted to Gen. Thomas Duncan, who was first officer under Brevet Maj. Gen. Emory. Now, it chanced that Gen. Duncan, while one of the best and bravest soldiers, was a rigid disciplinarian, and at the same time full of eccentricities. In fact he had but to be sounded when immediately there would escape so much good humor and infectious jokes that the whole regiment would be almost paralyzed with uncontrollable laughter. There was fun ahead for the boys, though duty was always imperative with their commander.

The expedition was accompanied by Maj. North's Pawnee scouts, who, while they had done genuine fighting service, had never been placed on guard duty. But Gen. Duncan was determined that they should be in every sense thorough soldiers, and consequently the Pawnees must be initiated. Of course, being with white men only for a short season, and having an officer over them who was fluent in their own language, the Pawnees were absolutely ignorant of English, save to repeat, like a parrot,

a few words which they heard frequently used. But this fact was ignored by Gen. Duncan, who ordered the guard stationed around camp and that every post should call each hour of the night as it was sounded, thus :

“Post No. 1, ten o’clock, all is well.” “Post No. 2, ten o’clock, all is well,” and so on, until the entire guard had made the call.

This order was explained to the Pawnees by Maj. North, but with all his explanations they could not comprehend the meaning, or if comprehending, their ignorance of English prevented them from executing the order with intelligence. The result was as follows :

The hour being called by one of the soldiers, the Indian occupying the adjoining post would sing out through a distorted remembrance :

“Ploss numbler five cents o’clock—go to h—l—don’t care, big chief.”

Another would try to repeat and stumble onto :

“Ploss numbler half past—How!—heap John—drink.”

They started out right, but after the first two words recollection came to them only in expressions which they had previously fixed in their minds.

This system, while it was superbly ridiculous, furnished food for laughter, and every night came to be a regular love-feast of fun ; but, like a joke frequently told, it at length grew tedious and Gen. Duncan was compelled to countermand the order, which relieved the Pawnees from guard duty, much to their satisfaction.

The expedition after remaining out for several days, met a party of Indians, who had massacred the Buck surveyors, and had a running fight with them. Buffalo Bill had a whip shot from his hand and a bullet went through his hat, but he killed two Indians by way

of compensation for his narrow escape. Meeting with no further adventures, the command returned to Ft. McPherson, where, upon arrival, Bill received from his wife the celestial gift of a first son, whom he named Kit Carson.

Peace being now restored, and all the troublesome Indians having returned to their reservations, Ft. McPherson became a quiet place, save for the usual disturbances indirectly chargeable to sutler's stores.

Bill, though still chief of scouts, performed little scouting service except between quarters and refreshment stations, which is always a congenial occupation to good trailers.

One day, as he was cracking jokes, spinning yarns, and keeping things about the post in good humor and condition, Gen. Emory approached him and said:

"Cody, I am annoyed very much by the petty thieving that is going on about here, nearly every day having to hear complaints from persons who have either lost horses or other personal property. We need a Justice of the Peace very badly, and I have decided to bestow that office on you."

"Good gracious! General, I appreciate the compliment, but if you can pick out any one of the Government mules about here that knows less of law than I do, then I'll give him my recommendation for the appointment."

"Well, you are not required to know much law; rather to discriminate between right and wrong, and mete out proper punishment."

"I know," answered Bill, "that it's wrong to get drunk; in fact, against the law—military—but just what written law I couldn't tell."

"I can, perhaps, deal with drunkenness in camp; I want you to deal with the thieves."

"All right, General, I can string a thief without mercy, and if that's the purpose of my appointment, why, just put your fist to the commission."

Bill was duly appointed 'Squire, and in about fifteen minutes after receiving his authority, a party living at McPherson, sought him with the following complaint:

"Say, 'Squire, a yaller-legged ranchero, that lives up on the Beaver, has jist stole one o' my hosses an' I want a writ o' replevin."

"Want a writ of replevin? why, don't you want your horse? What good would a writ of replevin do you without you first had the horse?"

"I don't know, they told me down here at headquarters that you was the 'Squire, and to ax you for a writ o' replevin."

"Where is your horse now?"

"Why, old yaller-legs is a drivin' ov him like h—l to'ard Beaver.

Bill turned around, and taking Lucretia Borgia, his rifle, from the rack, went out, mounted his horse, and told the complainant to lead off in the direction taken by "Yaller-legs."

The two rode rapidly for several miles, until they caught up with the thief, who was driving several head of horses.

Bill accosted him: "Hello! you've got a horse in that herd that belongs to this complainant; that piebald on the off side he says belongs to him."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"I'm going to make you cut out the horse, put a rope around his neck and deliver him to this man," answered Bill, at the same time bringing his rifle to a position suggestive of slaughter.

The thief obeyed the order with alacrity, but after

turning over the horse, Bill told him there were some damages to settle, and if the settlement were not made at once, he would take him back to McPherson.

"I can't go back there, my time is too precious; what are the damages?"

"Twenty dollars," replied Bill, which sum was immediately paid over and duly credited to Buffalo Bill's "official" account.

Soon after this incident, the knowledge of there being a squire in McPherson prompted a sample resident of the place to call on Bill and arrange terms with him for performing a marriage ceremony.

"How much money have you got, young man," asked Bill.

"O, I h'aint got much, but maybe I could raise ten dollars."

"Ten dollars goes," replied Bill; "bring over the girl and I'll hitch you according to the law and the prophets."

After the applicant had departed, Bill got down a copy of the Nebraska statutes and for more than an hour tried with becoming assiduity to find the form prescribed for marriage, but it was worse than hunting for Indians during a dark night in high prairie grass; he couldn't find it.

Thus unprepared, Bill was soon called on by the intended groom and bride, both of whom were apparently bowed down with either the gravity of the situation, or an innate diffidence, which was greatly increased by the motley crowd that stood around in the room waiting to witness the ceremony.

Bill infused some courage into the bewildered couple by saying:

"Are you the parties who want to get married?"

A feeble "yes" came from the groom.

"Well, then, brace up and answer the questions the law makes it my duty to ask you."

To the bridegroom—"Do you take this woman to be your wedded wife; to honor, support and protect her through life?"

"Yes, sir."

To the bride—"Do you accept this man for your lawful husband; to love, cherish and obey him, through good and ill report?"

"Yes, sir."



The Marriage Ceremony.

"That's good; now join hands while I pronounce the benediction: I now declare you man and wife, and let me add that whomsoever God and Buffalo Bill join together let no man put asunder. May you live long and prosper. Amen!"

The ceremony being completed, Bill kissed the bride, after which there was an adjournment for irrigating purposes.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

EARLY in September, 1871, a grand hunt was projected by Gen. Sheridan, whose intention was to afford some of his Eastern friends the excitement of a buffalo chase. Accordingly invitations to participate in the hunt were issued to and accepted by the following gentlemen: James Gordon Bennett; Gen. Anson Stager, of the Western Union Telegraph Company; Charles Wilson, editor *Chicago Journal*; Lawrence R. and Leonard W. Jerome; Gen. H. E. Davies; Gen. Fitzhugh; Gen. Rucker; Capt. M. E. Rogers; Carroll Livingston, and Surgeon General Arsch.

This party having announced their coming, were received at Ft. McPherson by a cavalry company escort under Gen. Emory and Major Brown. Almost immediately upon their arrival Gen. Sheridan sent for Buffalo Bill whom he introduced with flattering remarks to each one in the hunting party, after which he told Bill that the gentlemen had come to McPherson with the expectation of taking a big hunt under his special guidance and direction.

In anticipation of the arrival of these distinguished and wealthy gentlemen, Bill had taken considerable pains to present a slick appearance, having, as he expressed it, "curled my front teeth; brushed up a new buckskin toga; put on my Sunday moccasins; combed out the fringe on my trousers, and left nothing undone save 'banging' my front hair."

In a very interesting pamphlet of sixty-eight pages which Gen. Davies afterward wrote, describing the incidents of this pleasurable hunt, under the title, "Ten Days on the Plains," he mentions the fact that at his meeting



with Buffalo Bill on the occasion referred to, he thought the scout was the handsomest man that had ever trod the prairies ; such a perfect type of physical manhood, combining a powerful physique with such rare symmetry and harmony of feature, which perfections were brought into greater prominence by the extraordinary grace of his movements.

The party hunted over a large extent of territory for a period of ten days, killing many buffaloes, turkeys, jack rabbits, antelopes, etc., and having an excellent cook with them the cuisine was equal, if not superior, to the epicurean dainties set at Olympian feasts.

Early in January, 1872, Gen. Forsyth and Dr. Arsch, both of Gen Sheridan's staff, visited Buffalo Bill at Ft. McPherson for the purpose of arranging with him the preliminaries of a grand buffalo hunt which the Grand Duke Alexis, who was then visiting the United States, had expressed a desire to participate in. As the royal guest of the nation deserved, by reason of his position, special recognition, Bill at once conceived the idea of engaging a large number of Indians to take part in the hunt, and add to the Duke's pleasure by giving exhibitions and ceremonies which would acquaint him with their peculiar life. Acting upon this idea he visited Spotted Tail's camp—Sioux—on the Red Willow, where he readily influenced one hundred of the leading chiefs and warriors to accompany the Duke, and by his further request they assembled at Government Crossing, on the Red Willow. After obtaining the consent of the Indians, Capt. Eagan with a company from the second cavalry was despatched to the meeting point to arrange for the Duke's reception. The ground was cleared and leveled, a large wall tent erected and plenty of stores were carefully packed away sufficient to last the Duke's party during the hunt.

On the 12th of January, the royal guest and his party arrived at North Platte, over the Union Pacific Railroad, where they were received by Buffalo Bill, Captain Hays and a company of cavalry under Captain Eagan. There were also in waiting six ambulances and twenty extra saddle horses. Gen. Sheridan accompanied the Grand



“How!”

Duke and introduced him to Buffalo Bill, whereupon Bill tendered His Highness the use of Buckskin Joe, a famous buffalo horse, and an hour afterward the party were mounted and riding southward across the South Platte toward Medicine River.

Reaching the rendezvous on Red Willow, all necessary arrangements were found completed, and the Indians were in waiting, ready for the ceremonies expected of them.

Several members of the party were introduced to Spotted Tail, who appeared clad in government clothes, but which, it was evident, were never made for him. He wore a U. S. belt, with the buckle upside down, and as he advanced with extended hand, saying "How," he was a good model for a caricature artist.

In the afternoon, the Duke was highly entertained with exhibitions of wonderful horsemanship, lance throwing, bow shooting and sham fights, and in the evening the Indians gave a grand war dance, in which many of their singular ceremonies were introduced.

On the following day, Bill rode beside the Grand Duke and instructed him in the manner of shooting buffaloes, until looking away to the south nearly two miles, a large herd was discovered crossing the party's intended route. In a moment the Duke became very much excited and anxious to charge directly toward the buffaloes, but Bill restrained him for a time, until getting around to windward and keeping behind the sand hills, the herd was gradually approached.

"Now," said Bill, "is your time; you must ride as fast as your horse will go, and don't shoot until you get a good opportunity."

Away they went, tearing down the hill and throwing up a sand storm in the rear, leaving the Duke's retinue far behind. When within a hundred yards of the fleeing buffaloes the Duke fired, but unfortunately missed, being unused to shooting from a running horse.

Bill rode up close beside him and advised him not to fire until he could ride directly up on the flank of a buffalo, as the sport was most in the chase.

The two now dashed off together and ran their horses on either side of a large bull, against the side of which the Duke thrust his gun and fired a fatal shot. He was very much elated at his success, taking off his cap and waving it vehemently, at the same time shouting to those who were fully a mile in the rear. When his retinue came up there were congratulations, and every one drank to his good health with overflowing glasses of champagne. The hide of the dead buffalo was carefully removed and dressed, and the royal traveler in his journey-



The Grand Duke's First Buffalo.

ings over the world has no doubt often rested himself upon this trophy of his skill (?) on the plains of America.

An encampment was now made, as the party was quite fatigued, and the evening passed with song and story. On the following day, by request of Spotted Tail, the Grand Duke hunted for a while beside "Two Lance," a celebrated chief, who claimed he could send an arrow entirely through the body of the largest buffalo. This feat seemed so incredulous that there was a general denial of his ability to perform it; nevertheless, the Grand

Duke and also several others who accompanied the chief, witnessed, with profound astonishment, an accomplishment of the feat, and the arrow that passed through the buffalo was given to the Duke as a memento of Two Lance's skill and power.

On the same day of this performance the Grand Duke killed a buffalo at a distance of one hundred paces, with a heavy navy revolver. The shot was a marvelous—scratch.

After the hunt was concluded, Buffalo Bill, upon invitation of Gen. Sheridan, took the reins of an ambulance team and showed the Duke how old stage drivers set their horses "afire." But the drive was not appreciated sufficiently to applaud, for the Duke was an occupant of the ambulance. As they went down hill toward the Medicine at the rate of sixty miles a minute—more or less—there was a tuft of royal hair sticking up like a sugar loaf, while his coat-tails were flapping and cracking like the whips of an army of bull-whackers.

North Platte was reached after a week's absence, and upon taking the train for the East, the Grand Duke invited Bill into his car where, as a recognition of his regard and appreciation, he gave him numerous and valuable presents, concluding by extending him a cordial invitation to visit Russia, where he promised to receive him royally.

Soon after the Grand Duke's departure, Buffalo Bill received an invitation from a large number of leading men of New York City, to visit the East; among those who desired to extend him their hospitalities were James Gordon Bennett, August Belmont, Leonard W. Jerome, and many others of equal prominence. At the earnest solicitation of Gen. Sheridan, Bill at length concluded to accept the invitation, and made preparations accordingly.

Gen. Stager provided him with railroad passes and arranged for him to stop at Chicago, Niagara Falls, Buffalo and Rochester. At all these places a committee of reception was appointed to receive him with becoming honors, and he was introduced into the best society of all these cities.

Upon arriving at New York, Bill was received by a committee who escorted him directly to the Union Club, where he met the wealthy gentlemen who had sent the invitation. He was now taken in charge by the members, who gave him one ceaseless round of dinners and parties. Invitations came in on him so rapidly that it was confusion worse confounded, and he was in a very whirlpool of demoralization. One of the largest dinners given in his honor was prepared by James Gordon Bennett, but Bill was in such perturbation of mind, owing to the hundreds of invitations which lay before him, that he was unable to decide which had precedence, and consequently the Bennett dinner had to be postponed.

Mr. August Belmont then prepared a dinner for Bill, which was one of the most elegant affairs known in New York even to this day, and it is good to remember the fact that Bill graced the occasion with his presence, and Bennett was also there with forgiveness in his right hand for Bill's delinquency.

During this visit Buffalo Bill had the pleasure of attending the Bowery Theater, where was being produced a play entitled "Buffalo Bill, the King of Border Men," thereby seeing some of his noted adventures mirrored by an excellent actor named J. B. Studly. The play was a decided success, and as it became known among the audience that the real hero occupied a private box in the theatre, a shout went up which would not abate until the manager led Bill out on the stage for a speech. The house was

fairly filled to overflowing, and as the great scout had never appeared in the role of public speaker, he was worse embarrassed than the diffident couple he had married several months previously at Ft. McPherson. The fact is, he never felt so badly corraled in his life as he did on that occasion, and after muttering a few unintelligible words he retreated in disorder behind the scenes. But notwithstanding his embarrassment, the manager offered him five hundred dollars a week to take the leading role in the performance. But this amount was insufficient to counteract his extraordinary "want of cheek," and he declined the offer.

After indulging in an uninterrupted round of festivities for twenty days, Buffalo Bill visited some of his relatives in Westchester, Pennsylvania, whom he had never seen, and after spending a few days, in obedience to a telegram received from Gen. Sheridan, he returned to Ft. McPherson where his services were needed.

Directly after his arrival at the post, a party of Indians made an attack on McPherson Station, five miles from the fort, and after killing three men ran off several head of horses and cattle.

Captain Meinhold was at once ordered out with his company to pursue the depredating Indians, and Buffalo Bill was, of course, expected to accompany the command as trailer. On this expedition he had an assistant scout with him in the person of J. B. Omohundro, known throughout the United States as "Texas Jack," of whose career some mention will be made before concluding the adventures of Buffalo Bill.

For two days the command moved slowly on account of the indefinite trail, which the Indians had taken such pains to cover that it was almost impossible to follow it. However Bill's fertility of well-directed suspicions car-

ried the expedition to a point on the South Fork of the Loupe, where a camp was prepared at which all the soldiers, except four, halted, while Buffalo Bill, Texas Jack and the detail of four men pushed forward to reconnoitre a heavy strip of timber in which Bill thought the Indians were secreted.

Proceeding only a few miles and gaining the summit of a high ridge, Bill surveyed the country within his vision and saw encamped at the timber edge about one dozen Indians and near them several head of horses were grazing. He immediately proposed to charge the savages rather than take the chances of their escaping during his return to the command. All his men being of like mind, Bill rode down toward the Indians, keeping well behind the brush until he approached within a few hundred yards. He now ordered a charge which was made with such impetuosity that he was carried directly through the camp. The Indians, after firing a single volley, broke for their horses, but being too closely pursued tried to make another stand. Bill shot down two of them before they rallied, and killed a third one as he was trying to cross the Loupe. There were thirteen Indians in the original party, but three of them being killed the odds were now only six to ten. Some of them had crossed the river and these Bill pursued, expecting his men to follow, but instead of so doing, they rushed after seven of the Indians who remained on the north side of the river. Suddenly he found himself alone and at the same time saw two of the fugitives turn and ride directly toward him, shooting and yelling. He was struck by one of the shots in the left side of the head, producing only a scalp-wound, but drawing so much blood that he was almost blinded by the flow. With a swipe of his hand he cleared his face for a moment so as to fire, and



with the shot an Indian fell dead. The other one now turned to run, but Bill pushed his horse forward and when within a few yards, he raised himself in the stirrups and shot the Indian dead, thus scoring five Indians himself in a fight of only a few minutes, the scalps of which he secured and also recovered all the stolen stock.

Capt. Meinhold, hearing the firing, ordered his company into the saddle, but when the soldiers approached the scene of battle they found only the spoils of victory; seven dead Indians, as many bloody scalps, and twenty horses.

---

## CHAPTER XIX.

RETURNING from this expedition Buffalo Bill was engaged to accompany the Earl of Dunraven on an elk hunt, which lasted three weeks, to the infinite delight of the Earl, who was an excellent sportsman. Before completing this hunt, however, a party of wealthy gentlemen of Chicago went out to Ft. McPherson with letters from Gen. Sheridan, inviting Bill to guide them on a hunt, and so pressing was their invitation that he placed the Earl in charge of Texas Jack and accompanied the Chicago gentlemen, among whom were E. P. Green, Alexander Sample, Mr. Mulligan, of Keath & Mulligan, and a number of others. During this excursion the pleasure party was jumped by a band of Indians and had to run for a distance of six miles back to camp—and the way they pushed on the reins was interesting to see.

Following this hunt came another with several merchants, judges and lawyers from Omaha. U. S. District

Attorney Neville was one of this party, and was a novelty of no insignificant pretensions. He wore a plug hat and swallow-tailed coat which gave him a most amusing appearance when pursuing buffaloes.

After getting fairly upon the hunting grounds, at the request of the party, who were anxious to see so strange and dextrous a feat performed, Bill lariatied a large buffalo bull, while on a tight run, and then tied the animal to a tree, a thorough captive. But throwing the lasso was an easy employment for Bill, as he had practiced the art for several years and acquired a dexterity rarely to be met with, even among Mexicans.

In the fall of 1872 a convention of Democrats was held at Grand Island for the purpose of nominating a candidate to represent the Twenty-sixth Legislative District. Every county in the State was overwhelmingly Republican, and the Twenty-sixth District was as one-sided as a jug handle. Nominations were made by the Democrats, not with the view of electing their candidates, however, but for the purpose of maintaining their party organization.

In the convention referred to some one proposed the name of Wm. F. Cody for representative, and with the proposition a cheer went up forthwith which resulted in placing his name formally before the convention, where his nomination was instantly made unanimous.

No one was ever more surprised than Bill when he was informed of the convention's action, nor would he believe that his candidacy had really been considered until official information made the fact incontestible. He felt that it would be cowardice for him to refuse to make the race, as some one must be immolated for party's sake, and justice impressed him with the belief that he might as properly be the victim as any other man.

Being absent from home more than nine-tenths of his time, he made no canvass whatever of the district, yet his personal popularity was so great that nearly every one in the district, whether Democrat or Republican, gave him their votes, and his election was a triumph few men ever achieve. It was a testimonial to his honor, ability and noble qualities of such priceless value that what would not any man give to be the recipient of a like estimation?

But however great the honors, beyond the gratitude he felt he indulged little of the pride of his position, for about the time of taking his seat in the legislature a proposition was made him which his best interests dictated an acceptance of. Ned Buntline, who only a few years previously had met Buffalo Bill and made fame for both by his stories concerning the scout's adventures, published in the *New York Weekly*, being greatly impressed with the popular qualities of his hero, made him a flattering offer for his services as a leading theatrical attraction.

The proposition, when first made, very naturally appeared somewhat ridiculous to Bill, who thoroughly appreciated his imperfections and lack of experience, and was especially haunted by the remembrance of his confusion during his appearance at the Bowery Theater. But Buntline put a silver lining to all his persuasive words and covered his promises with a heavy veneering of gold.

The final result was that Bill resigned his seat in the legislature, and in the latter part of November he sent his letter of resignation to Gen. Reynolds as chief of scouts.

Having settled matters in the West, Bill took his family and started East, stopping one day in Omaha to accept the recognition paid his services by the citizens who had enjoyed his company on the hunt already referred to.

A grand dinner was the means taken for affording the recognition and appreciation they desired to manifest, and an elegant time was the result.

At Omaha Bill met Texas Jack, who had played the role of first assistant hero in Buntline's stories, and as Jack was anxious to accompany his old friend, Bill gladly engaged his company. They proceeded directly to Chicago, where Ned Buntline was stopping, while Bill's family went to their relations in St. Louis, who were not only glad to welcome Mrs. Cody but also to see the new accession, little Ora, who had been born only a short while before Bill's election to the legislature.

Upon reaching Chicago, Bill and Jack were met at the depot by Mr. Mulligan, who had engaged rooms at the Sherman House, intending that the two scouts should be his guests.

Buntline was so busily engaged delivering temperance lectures and preparing for the introduction of his stellary duet that it was not until the following day that he met the two rising theatrical comets.

When the three did meet, Bill and Jack were astounded upon shaking hands with Buntline to hear him spin out the following, scarcely taking time to breathe between sentences.

"How are you?—glad to see you—just in time—got everything arranged and we're going to make an immense hit—come over to the Amphitheatre with me and see Nixon, he's the manager—we open there Monday night and you must stir about lively so as to be ready—how do you feel? when did you arrive?—where are you stopping?" and thus he rattled away, like an old alarm clock just wound up, with a broken ratchet, and until he had run down somewhat neither of the scouts could reply.

When Bill caught up with the machine he managed to stammer out by way of contrast:

"Well, Buntline, I don't see just where to catch on; you don't mean to say that Jack and I are expected to make our appearance on the stage next Monday night?"

"That's just what I mean, and I have made arrangements accordingly. Come with me and we'll call on the manager."

The two scouts, who now perceived that they were trailing down a strange cañon, followed their new guide and said nothing further.

They proceeded to the Ampitheatre, where Mr. Nixon was found awaiting them, and to whom the scouts were introduced, after which Buntline said:

"Well, Nixon, here are the boys, and they are a pat hand, all flushes and fours, I tell you. We will open up on next Monday night with a flourish that will fire the people."

"So early as that, Ned? That will scarcely give the gentlemen time for preparation. Let me see your drama, and perhaps I can be of some assistance in organizing the company."

Buntline's reply was a very cyclone of surprise. Said he:

"I haven't written the drama yet, neither have I engaged any company, but there are plenty of unemployeed theatrical people in town who would be glad of an engagement."

"Why, you astonish me. No company nor drama, and only four days to write a play, engage a company, study the parts, rehearse, and get out the show bills. I guess we will not go any further with our arrangements, and the contract between you and me may be considered off."

This was the way Nixon received Buntline's admissions and declarations.

But not in the least dismayed, Buntline replied:

"All right. I believe the theater is not engaged for next week, so what rent will you charge me for the house for six nights?"

"Six hundred dollars."

"All right, again, I'll take it," was Buntline's response.

Having made this engagement for the theater, Buntline invited Bill and Jack over to his hotel, where a supply of pens, ink and paper was at once ordered, and three copyists engaged to record his dictations.

"Now I've got it, boys," exclaimed Buntline; "the play shall bear the title, 'Scouts of the Plains.'"

This appeared good, and with this the inspiration seemed to possess him, for he dictated the parts with such rapidity that in three hours' time the narrative was completed, and only required proper division to be given into the hands of the performers. Bill's and Jack's parts were first copied off and given them by Buntline, with the remark:

"Now, boys, I want you to pitch right in and don't leave this room until you are letter perfect; in the meantime I'll go out, engage the company, order the bills and advertising, and get everything in readiness. Upon my return I'll hear you rehearse and help you on the delivery."

With this he shot out of the room, fairly running over with the business in hand, and did not return until late in the evening.

After Buntline's departure the two scouts abstractedly looked at the numerous lines that had been left for them to memorize, and then each turned at the same time to eye the other. Bill was the first to speak:

"Jerusalem! Jack, this is worse than a village of hostiles. How are you on the commit?"

"Why, Bill, you know I never did have sense enough to remember anything but a bull-whacker's speech or an Indian's war-whoop."

"Well," answered Bill, "by close calculation I've decided that I could muster about two lines and a whoop in two years, and at this rate I might catch onto the whole piece in about three life times."

"Then don't despair," replied Jack, "for that beats me as far as McCarthy's flight beat that little party of Pawnees you told me about some days ago. Fact is, I'm in doubt about remembering my stage name, and I couldn't if Buntline hadn't considerably let me wear my old title."

Finding it impossible to bring themselves down to solid work, they made the most of the situation and spent the day in spinning yarns. When Buntline came bustling in during the afternoon he said:

"Well, boys, how are you getting along with your parts?"

"Oh, the parts are all right, only they don't like us very well. I guess, Ned, we will have to foreclose on the study; our health might give way if we continued," replied Bill.

"You must not get discouraged, boys," said Buntline, "for besides the incentive you have in the golden reward that awaits your efforts, remember that I have assumed a large responsibility and therefore none of us can afford to fail."

This had the effect to brace up the despondent scouts and they consented to recite some of their parts from the manuscript, but in this they made such a miserable failure that even Buntline was to some extent discouraged. But he was as patient as he was versatile, and by hard work the training at length began to tell. After drilling for

two days, Bill and Jack met the other members of the company at a general rehearsal, and things began to grow smooth, although to save their lives the scouts could not avoid a stiffness and apparent want of confidence in themselves which seriously interfered with the rendering of their parts.

Monday night came soon enough—too soon for the scouts—and at seven o'clock Bill and Jack went over to the theatre with the faces of chief mourners in a funeral procession. They repaired at once to the dressing room, where their buckskin suits—stage-dress—were adjusted, and when prepared they took a peep through the curtain, when they were horrified as well as delighted to see a packed house, with standing room at a premium.

Bill's first thought after this sight was of his feelings when standing before a large audience in the Old Bowery theatre; his knees knocked together like the palsy of old age, and when the curtain rang up and his appearance had to be made a more scared man actually, positively and literally, never lived than Buffalo Bill.

Buntline was cast in the play, and but for his encouraging presence and sustaining expedients, both Bill and Jack would certainly have dropped out of sheer stage-fright.

The audience, of course, greeted their appearance with vociferous cheers, and when the noisy ovation subsided Bill had lost the trail completely, and could not remember a single word of his part. But Buntline saw his embarrassment and came to the rescue by speaking foreign to the text:

"Where have you been, Bill? What has detained you so long?"

At this juncture fortune knocked at Bill's door, for seeing Mr. Mulligan, with whom he had hunted only a



few weeks before, sitting in a private box of the theatre, surrounded by several friends, he answered :

“I’ve just been out on a hunt with Mr. Mulligan, and we got corraled by a party of hostiles.”

This answer fairly brought down the house, as Mulligan was one of the best known business men in Chicago.

Both Bill and Buntline saw they had struck a fortunate cue, and that the only way out of their embarrassment was by following this colloquy. Buntline therefore queried :

“Is that so? well, tell us all about the hunt and your escape.”

Thereupon Bill, who is an excellent story teller and knows just how much ornamentation to give his recitals concerning Indians, related at some length all the particulars that a curious-loving audience could desire, and upon concluding the story there was an *encore* which shook the house like an explosion.

Another good fortune came to Bill when he and Jack went on in the second act, for their services were required only in a desperate Indian battle which was fought out to the intense satisfaction of both the audience and combatants. There were twenty supes dressed up like Indians, and the way in which the two scouts slaughtered them with blank cartridges was absolutely marvelous, killing off the entire crowd without receiving a scratch themselves.

On the following morning all the city papers contained lengthy accounts of the performance, and some of these were more interesting than the play itself. Of course Buffalo Bill and Texas Jack were not criticised as actors, but the drama was all split up the back, so to speak. Some asserted that if Buntline spent three hours in preparing that drama he must have been engaged in several

other occupations at the same time. Ned Buntline was killed in the second act, and some of the papers expressed the idea that it was a great oversight in the performers that they did not kill him in the first.

But in spite of the criticisms, the same play continued during each evening of the week, and at every performance the house was crowded with an enthusiastic audience, and Buntline's venture proved a thorough financial success.

At Mr. Nixon's solicitation he was taken in as a partner by Buntline, after the first week, and then the company began to travel, visiting all the large cities and meeting everywhere with the same astonishing success which had met them at Chicago. The season closed in June, 1873, and after a distribution of profits, amounting to six thousand dollars each, Bill and Jack returned to the West for another big hunt. They had remained away from their familiar pastures so long that nothing ever gave them so much pleasure as the greeting of old scouting friends and a buffalo dash over the prairies again.

In the fall they went to New York, where they reorganized the company for the season of 1873-74, engaging Wild Bill as one of the stars. This second season also proved successful, more so, financially, than the first, and when they closed, in May, 1874, they had money "to throw at the birds," as Bill declared, with fortune dogging their footsteps.

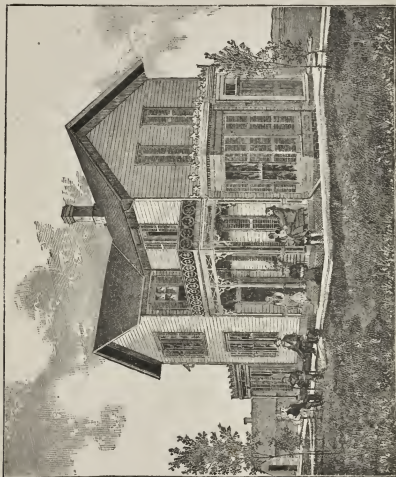
## CHAPTER XX.

BEFORE leaving for the West, Bill went to New York on some special business, and while there was introduced to Thomas P. Medley, a very wealthy gentleman of London. Mr. Medley had just arrived in America for the express purpose of taking a big hunt on the plains, and the moment he touched New York his correspondents and friends there told him of Buffalo Bill's presence in the city. He immediately called on the scout at the Metropolitan Hotel, and disclosing the object of his visit, engaged his services as guide, at a salary of one thousand dollars a month. Before starting out on the hunt, Mr. Medley told Bill that he did not want to be treated as a guest or employer; that he proposed doing all his own cooking while on the plains, kill his own game, and go hungry if he was so unfortunate as to secure none.

Some men have excellent intentions, like the sound sleeper who promises, the evening before, to rise early in the morning, only to find his resolution destroyed by the indisposition of morning sleep. But Mr. Medley kept well his determination made amid the luxuries of a fine hotel. He actually killed and cooked his game, carried wood to build the fire and the water he needed. This he did solely to acquaint himself with life on the plains. He was a generous man, and besides being a good hunter proved himself a most agreeable companion.

After finishing this hunt, which lasted about six weeks, Bill was engaged by Col. Mills, of the Third Cavalry, as guide to an expedition then preparing for a trip along Powder River, in the Big Horn country. The command was equipped at Rawlins, Wyoming Territory, and from this point crossed the Rocky Mountains and established a

supply camp at Independence Rock, on the Sweetwater, on the route over which Bill had ridden the pony express fifteen years before. It was here that California Joe joined the expedition, being engaged as scout by Bill, who knew how to estimate this old and valuable Indian fighter's services.



Residence of Hon. W. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) at North Platte, Neb.

After scouting the country several days, the expedition surprised a band of Arrapahoes, under Lone Wolf, whom they drove back to the reservations. A few days after this event the command was ordered back to Rawlins,

and Bill returned East to reorganize his theatrical company for the approaching season. Having purchased property in Rochester, New York, during his tour of 1873-74, which included a handsome residence, he now moved his family to that place, where they remained for several years and until Mrs. Cody's health, injuriously affected by that climate, admonished him to remove again to the West, his next settlement being at North Platte, Nebraska, in 1878, where he still resides.

In the succeeding season, 1875-76, his combination was, for the fourth time, put on the road, playing everywhere with great profit and satisfaction. It was during this tour, however, that the shafts of sorrow struck his family most severely, making such wounds as time can hardly heal.

While he was performing with his company at Springfield, Massachusetts, in April, 1876, a telegram was handed him announcing the dangerous illness of his little baby boy, Kit. His ambitions, heart and nature were so interwoven with the life of this most amiable and beautiful child that the shock completely unnerved him. Leaving another member of the troop to act his part, Bill immediately engaged a special car and hurried with all possible haste to Rochester. When he arrived, little Kit, who was being rapidly consumed by the fires of scarlet fever, retained barely enough consciousness to recognize his father, and putting his wan but loving little arms around his neck imprinted one affectionate kiss on his cheek, and then the spirit forsook its tenement—poor little Kit was dead.

There were many kind friends present to put back the long curly hair of the little one, whose feet were now treading the golden sands; many to tell of heaven's gain, and divide the grief of that stricken household, but none

could close the bleeding wound in the hearts of the prostrated parents. There were birds, and flowers, and sweet-scented breezes, and amid these they buried little Kit, in Mount Hope Cemetery, leaving at last the precious little mound of earth moistened with the libations of their tears.

Very soon after this most distressing incident, Cody received several pressing requests, by telegraph, from Gen. Carr to return West and join the Fifth Cavalry again, as chief of scouts; the Sioux war had just begun, and the whole north-west was panic stricken. Custer and Crook were operating in the Big Horn country, and the Fifth Cavalry had been ordered to scout the vicinity of the Black Hills. Buffalo Bill, so sorely stricken with grief, was anxious to plunge into some adventure that would excite him to forgetfulness of his affliction. Moved by these feelings, and enjoying under all circumstances the thrilling experiences of Indian warfare, he at once decided to accept the position offered by Gen. Carr, and went directly to Cheyenne, where the Fifth Cavalry was outfitting for the expedition.

Upon arriving at that place, Bill was met at the depot by Lieut. King, adjutant of the regiment, whom he accompanied to the camp, where he was received with a genuine ovation from all the soldiers. On the following morning the command started for Ft. Laramie, where it met Generals Sheridan, Forsyth and Frye, who were *en route* for Red Cloud Agency.

Bill accompanied Sheridan to that post, where the necessary orders having been left, they returned to Laramie, and from there the expedition journeyed northward to the South Fork of Cheyenne river. Reaching the Cheyenne country at the foot of the Black Hills, several bands of predatory Indians were met and dispersed after a few slight skirmishes.

After operating in the Black Hills country for two weeks Gen. Wesley Merritt superseded Gen. Carr in command of the Fifth Cavalry, and supposing the Indians had been driven out of that section, he ordered the regiment back to Ft. Laramie. While returning to that post word was brought to the command by a courier, of the Custer massacre on the Little Big Horn. With this news came an order directing Gen. Merritt to push on rapidly to Ft. Fetterman and join Gen. Crook, who had been ordered to the Big Horn country.



Brevet Major-Gen. Geo. A. Custer.

In this connection it is eminently proper to introduce a description of this, the most appalling holocaust that ever occurred on the plains; an event so disastrous that time, infinite though it is, can never make generations forget the tale of how Custer and his heroic band gave up their lives, while fighting in the desolate country drained by the Little Big Horn.

There are many circumstances connected with this terrible battle—primarily the causes leading thereto—which must be left to those who write the life of Gen. Custer

in *extenso*, as my purpose is rather to relate adventure than explain personal grievances and mistakes. Inasmuch as not a single soldier of Custer's command escaped to relate particulars of the dreadful massacre, many of the facts connected therewith are lost forever, as the Indians who participated in the slaughter can hardly be relied on to tell the whole truth concerning the battle. What I shall report here has been collected from a variety of sources, all from scouts and soldiers whose familiarity with the country and orders under which Gen. Custer was acting, the movements of his troops, position of the Indians, and mode of fighting, qualify them for forming a most reasonable opinion of how Custer met the foe, and how he struggled to his death.

The Sioux Indians have ever been regarded as the most intractable of Northern tribes; at one time their power was so great that they might have contested successfully with all the other tribes west of the Mississippi combined, and in addition to their superior numbers they are altogether better soldiers, brave, athletic and of marvelous endurance.

When the Black Hills gold fever first broke out, in 1874, a rush of miners into that country resulted in much trouble, as the Indians always regarded that region with jealous interest, and resisted all encroachments of white men. Instead of the Government adhering to the treaty of 1868 and restraining white men from going into the Hills, Gen. Custer was sent out, in 1874, to intimidate the Sioux. The unrighteous spirit of this order the General wisely disregarded, but proceeded to Prospect Valley, and from there he pushed on to the valley of the Little Missouri. Custer expected to find good grazing ground in this valley, suitable for a camp which he intended to pitch there for several days, and reconnoitre, but the



country was comparatively barren and the march was therefore continued to the Belle Fourche valley, where excellent grazing, water, and plenty of wood was found.

Crossing the Fourche the expedition was now among the outlying ranges of the Hills, where a camp was made and some reconnoitering done; but finding no Indians, Gen. Custer continued his march, skirting the Black Hills and passing through a country which he described as beautiful beyond description, abounding with a most luxurious vegetation, cool, crystal streams, a profusion of gaudy, sweet smelling flowers, and plenty of game.

Proceeding down this lovely valley, which he appropriately named Floral Park, an Indian camp fire, recently abandoned, was discovered, and fearing a collision unless pains were taken to prevent it, Custer halted and sent out his chief scout, Bloody Knife, with twenty friendly Indian allies to trail the departed Sioux. They had gone but a short distance when, as Custer himself relates: "Two of Bloody Knife's young men came galloping back and informed me that they had discovered five Indian lodges a few miles down the valley, and that Bloody Knife, as directed, had concealed his party in a wooded ravine, where they awaited further orders. Taking E company with me, which was afterward reinforced by the remainder of the scouts and Col. Hart's company, I proceeded to the ravine where Bloody Knife and his party lay concealed, and from the crest beyond obtained a full view of the five Indian lodges, about which a considerable number of ponies were grazing. I was enabled to place my command still nearer to the lodges undiscovered. I then despatched Agard, the interpreter, with a flag of truce, accompanied by ten of our Sioux scouts, to acquaint the occupants of the lodges that we were friendly disposed and desired to communicate with them. To prevent

either treachery or flight on their part, I galloped the remaining portion of my advance and surrounded the lodges. This was accomplished almost before they were aware of our presence. I then entered the little village and shook



Gen. Cust. Interpreter Addressing the Assembled Sioux.

hands with its occupants, assuring them, through the interpreter, that they had no cause to fear, as we were not there to molest them, etc."

Finding there was no disposition on the part of Gen. Custer to harm them, the Indians despatched a courier to the principal village, requesting the warriors to be present at a council with the whites. This council was held on the following day, but though Custer dispensed coffee, sugar, bacon and other presents to the Indians, his advice to them regarding the occupation of their country by miners was treated with indifference, for which, he observes in his official report, "I cannot blame the poor savages."

During the summer of 1875 Gen. Crook made several trips into the Black Hills to drive out the miners and maintain the Government's faith, but while he made many arrests there was no punishment and the whole proceeding became farcical. In August of the same year Custer City was laid out and two weeks later it contained a population of six hundred souls. These Gen. Crook drove out, but as he marched from the place others swarmed in and the population was immediately renewed.

It was this inability, or real indisposition, of the Government to enforce the terms of the treaty of 1868 that led to the bitter war with Sitting Bull and which terminated so disastrously on the 25th of June, 1876.

It is a notorious fact that the Sioux Indians, for four years immediately preceding the Custer massacre, were regularly supplied with the most improved fire-arms and ammunition by the agencies at Brule, Grand River, Standing Rock, Fort Berthold, Cheyenne and Fort Peck. Even during the campaign of 1876, in the months of May, June and July, just before and after Custer and his band of heroes rode down into the valley of death, these fighting Indians received eleven hundred and twenty Winchester and Remington rifles, and 413,000 rounds of patent ammunition, besides large quantities of loose pow-

der, lead and primers, while during the summer of 1875 they received several thousand stand of arms and more than a million rounds of ammunition. With this generous provision there is no cause for wonder that the Sioux were able to resist the Government and attract to their aid all the dissatisfied Cheyennes and other Indians in the Northwest.

Besides a perfect fighting equipment, all the Indians recognized in Sitting Bull the elements of a great warrior, one whose superior, perhaps, has never been known among any tribe; he combined all the strategic cunning of Tecumseh, with the cruel, uncompromising hatred of Black Kettle, while his leadership was far superior to both. Having decided to precipitate a terrible war, he chose his position with consummate judgment, selecting a central vantage point surrounded by what is known as the "bad lands," and then kept his supply source open by an assumed friendship with the Canadian French. This he was the better able to accomplish, since some years before he had professed conversion to Christianity under the preaching of Father DeSmet and maintained a show of great friendship for the Canadians.

---

## CHAPTER XXI.

WAR against the Sioux having been declared, brought about by the combined causes of Black Hill outrages and Sitting Bull's threatening attitude, it was decided to send out three separate expeditions, one of which should move from the north, under Gen. Terry, from Fort Lincoln; another from the east, under Gen. Gibbon, from Fort

Ellis, and another from the south, under Gen. Crook, from Fort Fetterman; the movements were to be simultaneous, and a junction was expected to be formed near the headwaters of the Yellowstone River.

For some cause, which I will refrain from discussing, the commands did not start at the same time. Gen. Crook did not leave Fetterman until March 1st, with seven hundred men and forty days' supply. The command was intrusted to Col. Reynolds, of the Third Cavalry, accompanied by Gen. Crook, the department commander.

Nothing was heard of this expedition until the 22d following, when Gen. Crook forwarded from Ft. Reno a brief account of his battle on Powder River. The result of this fight, which lasted five hours, was the destruction of Crazy Horse's village of one hundred and five lodges. Or that is the way the dispatch read, though many assert that the battle resulted in little else than a series of remarkable blunders which suffered the Indians to make good their escape, losing only a small quantity of their property.

One serious trouble arose out of the Powder River fight, which was found in an assertion made by Gen. Crook, or at least attributed to him, that his expedition had proved that instead of there being 15,000 or 20,000 hostile Indians in the Black Hills and Big Horn country, that the total number would not exceed 2,000. It was upon this estimation that the expeditions were prepared.

The Terry column, which was commanded by Gen. Custer, consisted of twelve companies of the Seventh Cavalry, and three companies of the Sixth and Seventeenth Infantry, with four Gatling guns, and a detachment of Indian scouts. This force comprised twenty-

eight officers and seven hundred and forty-seven men, of the Seventh Cavalry; eight officers and one hundred and thirty-five men of the Sixth and Seventeenth Infantry, two officers and thirty-two men in charge of the Gatling battery, and forty-five enlisted Indian scouts; a grand total of thirty-eight officers and nine hundred and fifty-nine men, including scouts.

The combined forces of Crook, Gibbon, Terry and Custer, did not exceed twenty-seven hundred men, while opposed to them were fully 17,000 Indians, all of whom were provided with the latest and most approved patterns of repeating rifles.

On the 16th of June Gen. Crook started for the Rosebud, on which stream it was reported that Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were stationed; about the same time a party of Crow Indians, who were operating with Gen. Crook, returned from a scout and reported that Gen. Gibbon, who was on Tongue River, had been attacked by Sitting Bull, who had captured several horses. Crook pushed on rapidly toward the Rosebud, leaving his train behind and mounting his infantry on mules. What were deemed accurate reports, stated that Sitting Bull was still on the Rosebud, only sixty miles from the point where Gen. Crook camped on the night of the 15th of June. The command traveled forty miles on the sixteenth, and when within twenty miles of the Sioux' principal position, instead of pushing on, Gen. Crook went into camp.

The next morning he was much surprised at finding himself attacked by Sitting Bull, who swooped down on him with the first streaks of coming dawn, and a heavy battle followed. Gen. Crook, who had camped in a basin surrounded on all sides by high hills, soon found his position so dangerous that it must be changed at all hazards.

The advance was therefore sounded, with Noyes' battalion occupying a position on the right, Mills on the right centre, Chambers in the centre, and the Indian allies on the left. Mills and Noyes charged the enemy in magnificent style, breaking the line and striking the rear. The fight continued hot and furious until 2 P. M., when a gallant charge of Col. Royall, who was in reserve, supported by the Indian allies, caused the Sioux to draw off to their village six miles distant, while Gen. Crook went into camp, where he remained inactive for two days.

In the meantime, as the official report recites: "Generals Terry and Gibbon communicated with each other June 1st, near the junction of the Tongue and Yellowstone Rivers, and learned that a heavy force of Indians had concentrated on the opposite bank of the Yellowstone, but eighteen miles distant. For fourteen days the Indian pickets had confronted Gibbon's videttes."

Gen. Gibbon reported to Gen. Terry that the cavalry had thoroughly scouted the Yellowstone as far as the mouth of the Big Horn, and no Indians had crossed it. It was now certain that they were not prepared for them, and on the Powder, Tongue, Rosebud, Little Horn or Big Horn rivers, Gen. Terry at once commenced feeling for them.

Major Reno, of the Seventh Cavalry, with six companies of that regiment, was sent up Powder River one hundred and fifty miles to the mouth of Little Powder to look for the Indians, and, if possible, to communicate with Gen. Crook. He reached the mouth of the Little Powder in five days, but saw no Indians, and could hear nothing of Crook. As he returned, he found on the Rosebud a very large Indian trail, about nine days old, and followed it a short distance, when he turned about up Tongue River, and reported to Gen. Terry what he had

seen. It was now known that no Indians were on either Tongue or Powder rivers, and the net had narrowed down to Rosebud, Little Horn or Big Horn rivers.

Gen. Terry, who had been waiting with Custer and the steamer *Far West*, at the mouth of Tongue River, for Reno's report, as soon as he heard it, ordered Custer to march up the south bank to a point opposite Gen. Gibbon, who was encamped on the north bank of the Yellowstone. Terry, on board the steamer *Far West*, pushed up the Yellowstone, keeping abreast of Gen. Custer's column.

Gen. Gibbon was found in camp, quietly awaiting developments. A consultation was had with Gens. Gibbon and Custer, and then Gen. Terry definitely fixed upon the plan of action. It was believed the Indians were on the head of the Rosebud, or over on the Little Horn, a dividing ridge only fifteen miles wide separating the two streams. It was announced by Gen. Terry that Gen. Custer's column "would strike the blow."

At the time a junction was formed between Gibbon and Terry, Gen. Crook was about one hundred miles from them, while Sitting Bull's forces were between the commands. Crook, after his battle, fell back to the head of Tongue River. The Powder, Tongue, Rosebud and Big Horn rivers all flow northwest and empty into the Yellowstone; as Sitting Bull was between the headwaters of the Rosebud and Big Horn, the main tributary of the latter being known as the Little Big Horn, with this knowledge of the topography of the country it is easy to definitely locate Sitting Bull and his forces.

Having now ascertained the position of the enemy, or reasoned out the probable position, Gen. Terry sent a dispatch to Gen. Sheridan as follows:

"No Indians have been met with as yet, but traces of



a large and recent camp have been discovered twenty or thirty miles up the Rosebud. Gibbon's column will move this morning on the north side of the Yellowstone, for the mouth of the Big Horn, where it will be ferried across by the supply steamer, and whence it will proceed to the mouth of the Little Horn, and so on. Custer will go up the Rosebud to-morrow with his whole regiment, and thence to the headwaters of the Little Horn, thence down that stream."

Following this report came an order, signed by E. W. Smith, Captain of the Eighteenth Infantry, Acting Assistant Adjutant General, directing Gen. Custer to follow the Indian trail discovered, pushing the Indians from one side, while Gen. Gibbon pursued them from an opposite direction. As no instructions were given as to the rate each division should travel, Custer, noted for his quick, energetic movements, made ninety miles the first three days, and discovering the Indians in large numbers, divided his command into three divisions, one of which he placed under Major Reno, another under Major Benteen, and led the other himself.

As Custer made a detour to enter the village, Reno struck a large body of Indians, who, after retreating nearly three miles, turned on the troops and ran them pell mell across Grassy Creek into the woods. Reno overestimated the strength of his enemies and thought he was being surrounded. Benteen came up to the support of Reno, but he too took fright and got out of his position without striking the enemy.

While Reno and Benteen were trying to keep open a way for their retreat, Custer charged on the village, first sending a courier, Trumpeter Martin, to Reno and Benteen with the following dispatch: "Big village; be quick; send on the packs." This order was too plain to be mis-

construed. It clearly meant that he had discovered the village, which he intended attacking at once ; to hurry forward to his support and bring up the packs, ambulances, etc. But instead of obeying orders, Reno and Benteen stood aloof, fearful lest they should endanger their position, while the brave Custer and his squad of noble heroes rushed down like a terrible avalanche upon the Indian village. In a moment, fateful incident, the Indians came swarming about that heroic band until the very earth seemed to open and let loose the elements of volcanic fury, and the fiends of Erebus, blazing with the hot sulphur of their impious dominion. Down from the hillsides, up through the valleys, that dreadful torrent of Indian cruelty and massacre poured around the little squad to swallow it up with one grand swoop of fire. But Custer was there at the head, like Spartacus fighting the legions about him, tall, graceful, brave as a lion at bay, and with thunderbolts in his hands. His brave followers formed a hollow square, and met the rush, and roar, and fury of the demons. Bravely they breasted that battle shock, bravely stood up and faced the leaden hail, nor quailed when looking into the blazing muzzles of five thousand deadly rifles.

Brushing away the powder grimes that had settled in his face, Custer looked over the boiling sea of fury around him, peering through the smoke for some signs of Reno and Benteen, but seeing none and thinking of the aid which must soon come, with cheering words to his comrades, he renewed the battle, fighting still like a Hercules and piling heaps of victims around his very feet.

Hour after hour passed and yet no friendly sign of Reno's coming ; nothing to be seen saving the battle smoke, streaks of fire splitting through the misty clouds, blood flowing in rivulets under tramping feet, dying comrades,



DEATH OF GENERAL CUSTER .



and Indians swarming about him, rending the air with their demoniacal "hi-yi-yip-yah,—yah-hi-yah."

The fight continued with unabated fury until late in the afternoon; men had sunk down beside their gallant leader until there was but a handful left, only a dozen, bleeding from many wounds, and hot carbines in their stiffening hands. The day is almost done, when, look! heaven now defend him, the charm of his life is broken, for Custer has fallen; a bullet cleaves a pathway through his side, and as he falters another strikes his noble breast. Like a strong oak stricken by the lightning's bolt, shivering the mighty trunk and bending its withering branches down close to the earth, so fell Custer; but like the reacting branches, he rises partly up again, and striking out like a fatally wounded giant lays three more Indians dead and breaks his mighty sword on the musket of a fourth; then, with useless blade and empty pistol falls back the victim of a dozen wounds. He is the last to succumb to death, and dies, too, with the glory of accomplished duty in his conscience and the benediction of a grateful country on his head.

"So sleeps the brave who sank to rest,  
By all his country's wishes blessed."

The place where fell these noblest of God's heroes is sacred ground, and though it be the Golgotha of a nation's mistakes it is bathed with precious blood, rich with the germs of heroic inheritance.

"It was the last libation Liberty draws  
From the hearts that break and bleed in her cause."

I have avoided attaching blame to any one, using only the facts that have been furnished me of how Custer came to attack the Sioux village and how and why he died.

When the news of the terrible massacre was learned,

soldiers everywhere made a pilgrimage to the sacred place, and friendly hands reared a monument on that distant spot, commemorative of the heroism of Custer



The Monument where Custer Fell.

and his men ; collected together all the bones and relics of the battle and piled them up in pyramidal form, where they stand in sunshine and in storm, overlooking the

Little Big Horn. The engraving herewith given is from a photograph taken while a heavy snow-storm was prevailing.

---

## CHAPTER XXII.

AFTER the massacre of Custer's little band, there was great activity in military movements in the Northwest, and an almost consuming desire to give the Sioux and Cheyennes a touch of wholesale retaliation. With the news of the disaster came a report from Col. Santon, of the Fifth Cavalry, informing Gen. Merritt that eight hundred Cheyenne warriors had left the Red Cloud Agency to join Sitting Bull on the Big Horn, and instructing him to join Gen. Crook at Ft. Fetterman.

Instead of following the strict letter of the order, Gen. Merritt, with Buffalo Bill as his chief of scouts, concluded to intercept the Cheyennes, a most commendable purpose, which happily justified his good judgment.

Selecting five hundred of his best men and horses, Gen. Merritt made a forced march toward War Bonnet Creek, which he knew the Indians must cross, and at a point, too, which he estimated it would be easy to reach in advance of them.

On July 17th the command reached the creek, and Buffalo Bill was sent out to discover if the Cheyennes had yet effected a crossing, but finding no trail he continued scouting for some distance, and was rewarded by seeing a large body of Indians approaching from the south. Bill rode rapidly back to camp to acquaint Gen. Merritt of his discovery, whereupon the cavalry was ordered to mount and hold themselves in readiness, while

Bill and the General should ride out on a tour of observation. Selecting a high knoll, by the use of field glasses, the Cheyennes were plainly seen riding directly toward Gen. Merritt's camp. Presently a party of fifteen Indians were observed to leave the main body and ride at a furious pace northward, and scanning the surroundings critically to ascertain the cause, Bill saw two mounted soldiers, evidently couriers, trying to reach Gen. Merritt's camp. In order not to apprise the Indians of the presence of the regiment, Bill suggested to the General the advisability of waiting until the couriers should come near the command, when, having led the fifteen Indians some distance from the main party, he would take the other scouts and cut the squad off so as to insure their capture.

Gen. Merritt approving of Bill's idea, the latter rode back to camp, selected fifteen men and hurried to a place of concealment, where he waited for the pursuers. It was but a few moments until the couriers dashed by with the Indians not more than two hundred yards in the rear. Bill and his men leaped out of their ambush and sent a rattling fire after the Indians, three of whom were killed; the rest turned and ran back to the main party, which had halted upon hearing the rapid firing.

After stopping for a few moments the Cheyennes renewed their march, thinking they were opposed by a small body that would offer no particular resistance. Another advance party of twenty Indians was sent out from the main body, and as they approached near, Bill and his men charged them, but the Indians, seeing their numbers were superior, made a stand, and a lively fight ensued. Each side then drew off, and while they stood studying their opportunities, one of the Indians, richly dressed in a chief's ornamentation, large war bonnet, capped with eagle's feathers, and carrying a Winchester



rifle, rode out from his squad several rods, and made the following speech, addressing Buffalo Bill, whom he had seen before, and heard much of.

“Me know you, Pa-he-has-ka (the Indian for “long hair”), you great chief, kill many Indians ; me great chief, kill many pale faces ; come on now fight me.”

Here was a direct challenge, and Buffalo Bill was not the man to decline it. He would not have shrunk from fighting a duel with any living man ; so he shouted back to the chief :

“I’ll fight you ; come on ; let Indians and white men stand off and see the Red Chief and Long Hair fight with rifles.”

This was a genuine novelty, and of such an exciting nature that the troops advanced to a position commanding a view of the battle ground, while the Indians rode up also sufficiently close to witness the combat.

When everything was in readiness, Bill advanced on horseback about fifty yards toward his opponent, and then the two started toward each other on a dead run. They were scarcely thirty yards apart when both their rifles were discharged simultaneously. The Indian’s horse fell dead, having been struck by the bullet from Bill’s rifle, and at the same time the latter’s horse stepped into a hole and tumbled over ; thus they were both dismounted. Bill was not hurt by the fall, and springing to his feet, he faced his recovered antagonist, now not more than twenty paces distant. Again the two fired almost simultaneously, but the Indian missed, while Bill’s aim was good, his bullet planting itself in the chief’s breast. As the Indian reeled and fell Bill leaped on him and in the next instant had thrust his bowie-knife into the warrior’s heart. With a skillful movement, acquired only after long practice, Bill tore the war-bonnet off his victim’s head and

then scalped him in the most gentlemanly and dexterous manner. Then holding up the bonnet and reeking cap-sheaf, he exclaimed :

*"The first scalp for Custer!"*

Following this event, which was a display of genuine pluck very few men possess, the main body of Cheyennes charged down on Bill and would have killed him had not the cavalry been so near that they intercepted the savages before they could reach him.

Finding that the Indians could not now be ambushed, Gen. Merritt ordered his troops to charge, and a running fight ensued for a distance of thirty miles, the Cheyennes retreating toward Red Cloud Agency, to which point the pursuit was continued. Upon arriving at the agency, a thousand dissatisfied Indians were found discussing the advisability of joining Sitting Bull, but they offered no hostility to the Fifth Cavalry, which stood ready to fight the entire Cheyenne tribe.

At Red Cloud Bill learned that the name of his victim in the rifle duel was Yellow Hand, son of Cut Nose, one of the leading Cheyenne chiefs. Upon hearing of the death of his son, this chief sent a white interpreter to Buffalo Bill, offering four mules for the return of Yellow Hand's scalp, ornaments, gun, pistols and knife, which Bill had captured, but the messenger had to return without the trophies.

Leaving Red Cloud Agency, Gen. Merritt started to join Gen. Crook, who was encamped near Cloud Peak, in the Big Horn Mountains. A junction was made on the third of August at Goose Creek, and after remaining in camp one day the united expedition set out for Tongue River, leaving their trains behind them. Reaching that point, they marched on to the Rosebud, where a large Indian trail, indicating seven thousand warriors, was



BUFFALO BILL'S DUEL WITH YELLOW HAND.



struck, which the command followed for several miles, but as the trail was four days old, and the Indians were traveling very rapidly, the pursuit was abandoned for the day.

While on the Rosebud the command was met by Capt. Jack Crawford, whose familiar title is "Capt. Jack, the Poet Scout of the Black Hills." Jack brought dispatches to Gen. Crook from Ft. Fetterman, distant three hundred miles, through a country as full of hair-lifting Indians as Italy is of beggars, but he got through all right, without losing a hair.

After remaining in camp one night, the command pushed on again, following the large trail down the Rosebud for five days, but no Indians were seen. A cloud of dust and a large party of horsemen, however, caused a rapid preparation for battle, but when each side was ready for action the discovery was made that the approaching party was Gen. Terry's command and some friendly Nez Perces and Snakes.

When the two armies came together Col. Weir recognized Buffalo Bill, and at once pulled off his hat and shouted:

"Here's Buffalo Bill. God bless him! give him a cheer!" and the whole command responded in the heartiest manner.

After a lengthy council between Generals Terry and Crook, the Fifth Infantry was ordered to return by forced march to the Yellowstone, and from there proceed by boat down to the mouth of Powder river, that they might intercept any Indians attempting to cross at that point.

The main consolidated command continued to follow the large trail for several days, but seeing no Indians and running short of supplies, a return was made to the confluence of the Powder and Yellowstone rivers, where a permanent camp was established.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

WHILE lying in camp on the Yellowstone, Bill and a half-breed named Louis Richard were ordered to accompany Gen. Mills on a scouting expedition down the Yellowstone on the steamer *Far West*. This novel idea emanated from Gen. Terry, who thought that a steamboat was a good thing to beat up an Indian trail at the crossings. Four companies were taken on board for both defensive and offensive purposes.

When the boat started down the river Bill and Richard took up a position on top of the pilot house, from which point of observation a large scope of country lay before their view. But the boat proceeded as far as Glendive Creek without any Indians being seen by the "outlookers." At this point Col. Rice, in charge of one company of the Fifth Infantry, was met, who, the day previous, had fought a party of Indians with a Rodman cannon and killed three of their number.

Having to remain over night at Glendive Creek, Gen. Mills desired to communicate with Gen. Terry, and, of course, selected Bill to carry the message, as the route was the roughest as well as the most dangerous that a man ever traveled over. But Bill performed the duty without a word of complaint, and during the night rode seventy-five miles through the *bad lands*, reaching Gen. Terry's camp at daylight next morning.

The bad lands, so called because no worse designation could be thought of at the time by the party who named them, are a barren waste of country, over which it is most dangerous to travel, owing to the numerous broad fissures which run zig-zag and in every direction, like the cracks which appear in the basins of recently dried up ponds in

summer time ; the only difference being that in the bad lands these cracks are from two to six inches wide, some even much wider, and extending to a depth of many feet. In riding through such a country, especially during the night, the dangers may be readily understood. In the trip made by Buffalo Bill, he was thrown from his horse several times, and upon reaching Gen. Terry's camp there were bruises all over his body.

As it now appeared certain that Sitting Bull had started for the British possessions, and that the prospects for further fighting were decidedly indefinite, Bill concluded to start east again for the purpose of making preparations for the approaching theatrical season. He had conceived the idea that a drama, with all its situations based upon the Sioux war, would form a very successful enterprise, and was determined to try the experiment. Accordingly, taking his leave of Generals Terry and Crook, who were then packing up to start out on the old Indian trail on Powder River, he took the down-going steamer on the Yellowstone for Ft. Beauford ; but after proceeding twenty miles, another steamer was met, coming up the river, having on board Gen. Whistler, with a body of soldiers who were *en route* to join Gen. Crook. The two boats landed together, and among the first persons Bill met among the passengers, was Texas Jack, who had been employed as dispatch carrier for the New York *Herald*.

Gen. Whistler interviewed Bill regarding the campaign, and learning that Crook and Terry had left the camp at the mouth of Powder River, he begged of Bill to carry some dispatches which he had from Gen. Sheridan to Gen. Terry. Being now on his journey to the East, Bill tried to avoid making the trip, but upon learning that no other person with Gen. Whistler would perform the duty, he consented, and that morning, mounted on the Gener-

al's fine thoroughbred, he started out to overtake Gen. Terry, which he accomplished before dark.

After Bill had taken lunch, Gen. Terry requested him to carry a message back to Gen. Whistler. This duty he gladly performed, as it was over the route he would have to take anyhow, and at one o'clock in the morning Bill arrived at the boat. He was astounded, upon delivering the message, to hear the following address from Gen. Whistler:

"Mr. Cody, immediately after your departure yesterday morning, a considerable body of Indians made their appearance in the vicinity, and have been skirmishing around the boat ever since. As my force here is insignificant, I am very anxious to communicate again with Generals Terry and Crook. I tried in vain, all day yesterday, to induce some one to carry my message, and while I feel that it is asking too much of you, really, the matter is of so much importance that, as a last resort, I am compelled to ask you to take my dispatch. I'll give you any horse you want, and see that you are well paid for the service."

"Never mind the pay, General; if your message is ready I will start back again," was Bill's answer.

At two o'clock in the morning the brave scout set out on his return to Gen. Terry, regardless of the cordon of Indians that surrounded the boat. His woods-craft enabled him to pass through the lines unobserved, and in four hours from the time of leaving the boat, he dashed into Gen. Terry's camp just as the command was on the point of moving. After reading Gen. Whistler's message, Terry held a council with Crook, which resulted in the latter continuing on the trail, while Terry turned back to the Yellowstone, which he crossed on boats, and then pushed his forces in the direction of the Dry Fork



of the Missouri, Bill acting as guide at Gen. Terry's urgent request. The command marched for three days, until they reached the buffalo range, where numerous fresh signs of Indians, who had evidently been hunting, were discovered.

At this point Gen. Terry asked Bill to carry a dispatch to Col. Rice, who was still in camp at Glendive Creek, eighty miles distant. Night had already set in, and with it came a drizzling rain and a terrible wind-storm. Notwithstanding the darkness, and the further fact that Bill had never before set foot in that section of country, he set out at ten o'clock and traveled as best he could until morning, having made about thirty-five miles. As the country was full of predatory bands of Indians, he selected a place affording excellent concealment, with the intention of remaining there until night, as to have attempted a passage of the prairies during daylight on a poor horse, such as he was riding, would have been suicidal.

After eating a breakfast of bacon and crackers, he lay down for a sleep, but an hour or more afterward he was awakened by a rumbling noise, and crawling to the edge of the bluff he was on, he looked out over the prairie below and saw a large hunting party of Indians chasing buffaloes, which they were killing and packing on their ponies. This they continued for fully two hours, and when their meat was secured they started off in the direction which Bill must travel to reach Glendive Creek. It was pretty certain that the camp of the Indians was somewhere along his route, but Bill never hesitated on that account to continue his journey.

When the shades of night had deepened, he mounted again and set out, and by making a large semi-circle he avoided the Indians and reached Col. Rice at daylight

the following morning. After delivering Gen. Terry's message Bill bade adieu to Col. Rice, and again embarking on the Far West, he proceeded down the Yellowstone to Bismarck, where he took passage by rail to Rochester, New York.

After meeting his family, he began preparations for his next theatrical tour, by employing a gentleman to write a drama for him which would introduce the striking situations of the Sioux war. The play was soon prepared, and was in five acts, nearly all of which were replete with mimic battles and scalping picnics. The performance invariably filled the house and brought down the galleries, so that the season proved successful even beyond anticipation.

While in New York, Bill had a novel bridle made, the like of which was never before seen. In all his Indian fights he had made it a point to preserve the hair and scalps of all his victims (and they were hundreds), and with curious impulse he had a bridle made of the hair thus preserved; it was most deftly worked by a skillful hair artist, while the bit, buckles and side stars were of bullion silver handsomely engraved. The whole, when completed, was a master-piece of workmanship, and such a novelty, besides, that August Belmont offered Bill one thousand dollars for it. But this offer was refused, as the bridle had been made for a special purpose—for presentation to Miss Emma Lake, the world's famous equestrienne. It was accordingly given to this admirable little lady, who has exhibited the bridle in nearly all the leading cities of America.

During the season of 1876-77, Bill visited all the Eastern cities, and then made a tour of California, where he met with unexampled success. Upon his return, he and Major North located a ranche on the South Fork of the

Dismal River, in Nebraska, upon which they placed a large herd of cattle, the marking and branding of which occupied him the entire summer. In the following fall Bill visited Red Cloud Agency, where he engaged a party of Sioux Indians to accompany him on his theatrical tour of 1877-78. He then returned with these to Rochester, where, placing his eldest daughter, Arta, at a young ladies' seminary, Mrs. Cody and little Ora traveled with him during the season.

During this tour Bill introduced a new drama, the incidents of which were founded on the Mountain Meadows Massacre, entitled: "May Cody; or, Lost and Won." This season was the most profitable of any he had enjoyed up to that time, and at its close he removed from Rochester to North Platte, Nebraska, where he is now living.

Since 1878 Bill has continued in the role of professional actor, introducing to the amusement-loving public for three consecutive seasons his new and best play, written by Col. Prentiss Ingraham, entitled: "The Knight of the Plains; or, Buffalo Bill's Best Trail." How successful he has been may be estimated by the fact that during the season of 1880-81 his net profits from the stage aggregated forty-eight thousand dollars.

During the season of 1880-81 an incident occurred which illustrates Buffalo Bill's wonderful accuracy of aim and goes far to prove the assertion that since the death of Wild Bill he is the champion rifle and pistol shot of the world, and no one is likely to ever wrest the title of champion from him.

The incident referred to may be recorded as follows: During September, 1880, Bill was performing at Pope's theater in St. Louis, having with his company the celebrated marksman Ira Paine, whose exhibitions of rifle

and pistol shooting have been witnessed with delight by thousands of people in various cities of the United States.

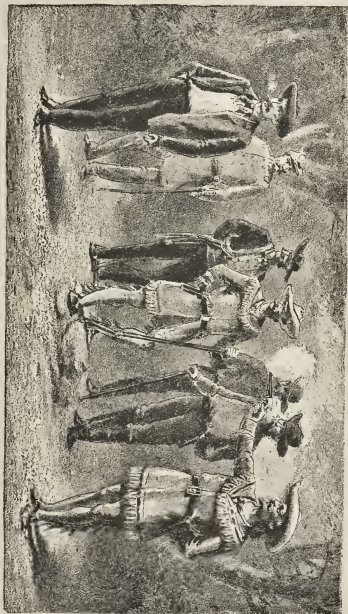
One morning, as a number of Bill's and Paine's friends, among others Capt. D. L. Payne, the scout, and Dr. Voerster, ex-Coroner of St. Louis, were engaged in friendly conversation, a dispute arose respecting the relative abilities, as marksmen, of Bill and Ira Paine. As a result of the dispute a contest was arranged to take place the following afternoon at the Fair Grounds, a wager being laid of a basket of champagne and a supper of oysters, Capt. Payne backing Bill and Ira Paine betting on himself. The shooting was to consist of rifle and pistol practice, steady and snap shots, at a mark and flying glass balls.

The terms and place having been agreed upon, the party, reinforced by several other friends, repaired to the Fair Grounds, where the contest took place. Buffalo Bill won with such ease in all the variety of shots, that comparison in the contest would be ridiculous. Out of one hundred glass balls thrown from a distance of forty yards, Bill broke ninety-eight and chipped another, making ninety-nine out of a possible hundred. A dispute arose over the one ball that was chipped, some contending that it was missed, while Capt. Payne maintained that it was struck, and to prove his assertion he walked out on the field, and picking up the ball, was returning with it to the crowd, when Bill shouted to him:

"Hold on, Payne; let me cut the ashes off your cigar without touching the fire."

Payne stopped, and turning his face sideways, permitted Bill to fire. The bullet struck the ashes, leaving the fire exposed.

"Now," said Bill, "I'll cut off the tip end of the cigar, so that you will only lose the fire."



A Shot that Beat William Tell's.

Payne held himself stiff and perfectly steady while Bill performed the second feat successfully. These wonderful exhibitions of skill elicited great applause, though they were made with a Winchester rifle. Payne started toward the crowd, but when within twenty yards, Bill again called out to him :

“Stop again, Payne, and I’ll see if I can’t cut the cigar out of your mouth with this pistol without touching your lips.”

Payne, fearing nothing, at once turned sideways again, but the crowd thought the danger of such a shot was too great, and begged Bill not to try it. But Payne said with some warmth :

“Let him shoot ; Buffalo Bill always hits what he aims at.”

Dr. Voerster, who is an excellent shot himself, still protested, but when he found that there was a determination to attempt the feat, he walked out to Payne, and placing his hands on either side of the scout’s head, steadied him while Bill shot. At the crack of the pistol Payne turned about and exhibited a little stump of his cigar, the part he had held between his teeth. The bullet had struck under his moustache and cut off the cigar within less than a quarter of an inch of his lips.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## CONCLUSION.

BUFFALO BILL is one of the few famous scouts who has justly won the renown which encircles his name. His exploits have been so numerous, involving a display of such extraordinary daring and magnificent nerve that language cannot exaggerate them. Gen. Sheridan makes bold to assert that Buffalo Bill has killed more Indians than any white man that ever lived. It would be no credit to the daring scout if these Indians had fallen without justification, but since they were the victims of legitimate war, and were slain in the performance of a sworn duty, he may properly wear the laurels and deserve the plaudits of civilization whose effective instrument he has ever been.

Before closing this narrative of his wonderful life, I cannot resist the temptation to include a few words respecting his social relations, which are so amiable that no man can possibly be happier than he.

In May, the present year (1881), I received an invitation from Buffalo Bill to visit him, which I accepted with much pleasure, as it afforded me the opportunity I so much desired for acquainting myself with his personal peculiarities and social surroundings. Upon returning from that visit I prepared a correspondence for the "*American Traveler's Journal*," recounting my exceedingly pleasant experiences with the celebrated scout and his family, extracts from which I will here reproduce for the purpose of giving the reader an idea of his entertaining character, and the interesting nature of his surroundings:

I met Mr. Cody, by arrangement, in Omaha on the 5th,

where I was received with that generous cordiality for which he is distinguished, and remained with him in that city during two days, in order to attend an entertainment at Brownell Seminary, at which institution his beautiful daughter, Arta, is a student. *En passant* I will be excused for remarking that Miss Arta, though but fourteen years of age, is one of the most charming and interesting young ladies it has been my fortune to meet. She is accomplished both in music and rudimentary literature, being a thorough student, and free from the vanity which so frequently turns the heads of much less handsome young girls. With her beauty and accomplishments, she combines that noble trait of loving devotion to her mother and father, inheriting much of the peculiarities of the latter; especially her facility in shooting and riding, in both of which she has few superiors.

On Saturday, the 7th, I departed in Mr. Cody's company for his home, which we reached at 2 A. M., to find his wife and younger daughter, Ora, eight years of age, awaiting us with buggies, in which we rode to his beautiful residence, which is situated one mile west of North Platte, near the U. P. railroad track. This house, built after a design furnished by his estimable wife, combines all the elegancies of a thorough mansion. It has three large intersecting parlors, the floors covered with luxurious carpets, and the walls bedecked with handsome paintings, the more conspicuous being pictures of his family and frontier friends, Wild Bill, Capt. Jack Crawford, Texas Jack, hunting scenes, Indian battles, etc. In addition to these, there is a fine piano and an organ, on both of which instruments Mrs. Cody and her elder daughter are excellent performers. The table is beautified with beaten silver, and the cellar filled with the finest wines and choicest liquors; for there is a constant stream of visitors, and to



entertain guests in regal style is a forte peculiar to Buffalo Bill and his elegant wife.

On the morning following our arrival at North Platte, with the first intimation that Buffalo Bill had returned home, the town put on its wardrobe of congratulations; flags went up, and the visitors flocked down on him with welcomes so hearty as to approach an ovation. His popularity reverses the biblical adage, "A prophet is not without honor save in his own country."

Omitting details of his reception by the citizens, delighted to see him again after a nine months' absence as a popular theatrical star in the East, by his invitation a party was at once collected, and on horseback we rode southward for a hunt near C. H. Groner's (the sheriff's) ranche. The season was too early for antelope, so we had to content ourselves with smaller game, such as ducks, snipe and curlews, which were none too plenty. But in addition to the pleasure of killing several birds, I met with the characters known as "cow-boys," with whose peculiar manners I sought to familiarize myself by remaining over night at the ranche, and participating in their games and duties. A shot at a passing coyote was the only thing affording any excitement, but this very soon disappeared with the little animal, and the following day I was glad to return in a buggy sent for me.

Beyond the little rifle-practice we had indulged in at Buffalo Bill's house and on the prairie, which I considered creditable to the entire party participating, I had not yet seen anything of special importance, but it was reserved for me to witness remarkable sights on Tuesday, which would have compensated for a trip a thousand times greater. Early in the morning of that day, the preliminaries having been arranged the evening previous, a party consisting of Buffalo Bill and wife, ex-Congress-

man Taft, wife and daughter, Major Heinman and wife, with the writer acting as cavalier to the rear, started out for a picnic excursion eight miles north of the town, taking guns of various calibre with us, and ammunition sufficient to provide for an incessant fusilade on glass balls, birds and game. The commissary, which was under the immediate supervision of Mrs. Cody, was all that the most fastidious epicurean could have desired, consisting of abundant substantials, as well as those rare and dainty delicacies which good housewives know so well how to prepare. To these we were all devoutly attached, even to the uttermost vestige of the provisionary spread.

When the feasting was over, Buffalo Bill consented to amuse the company for a time with some of his prairie pastimes. At first I was quite willing to lay wagers of ten cents a shot against his hitting flying glass balls, hurled by myself, with his Winchester, but as the appearances very soon convinced me that if I continued the betting without hedging I would have to be sent home C. O. D., I adopted a wiser course. But I got even with him by accepting his bets that I could not hit consecutive stationary glass balls, at ten paces, with his gallery rifle.

But the most exciting part of the entertainment was reserved for the last, which was a tableau of unparalleled riding and marksmanship. Mounting his gray pony, from whose back a shot had never before been fired, Bill rode out from the camp with his Winchester, I accompanying him on a fleet horse. Marking objects on the route by pointing to them, as the insubordination of his horse precluded the possibility of first locating the marks along a defined route, Bill put his steed upon the run and began firing right and left, shooting at a distance of fifty and seventy-five yards. At every shot the horse would

jump sideways so violently that it appeared impossible for the agile rider to keep his seat ; yet he seemed like a veritable centaur, so perfectly was his equilibrium maintained while his hands were both occupied in handling the gun, which he fired with a rapidity most astonishing. Not only did he thus exhibit a truly wonderful accomplishment as a rider, but his marksmanship was equally astonishing, for with all his rapid firing from a running, fractious horse the bullets were invariably sent with a precision which would have won honor for an expert shooting from the ground at a target. Surprise cannot express my feelings at witnessing the remarkable feats he accomplished with rifle on horseback. His tours through the country as an actor have familiarized nearly every one in the United States with his accuracy of aim, which has elicited such spontaneous plaudits from admiring audiences ; yet Buffalo Bill on the stage is but a by-play to Buffalo Bill on the plains. It is only on the broad prairies, beyond the boundaries of confinement, that his skill can be shown to advantage, and with a fleet, wild horse Buffalo Bill surpasses the most preposterous exaggerations of the Leather Stocking stories.

Socially, this genuine hero in deed and reputation is one of the most generous and noble-hearted of men. To meet him is to be his friend. He is the very soul of humor and anecdote, regaling a camp with an inexhaustible fund of rare experiences and witticisms. At Omaha we met Lieut. Frederick Schwatka, the most successful of all arctic explorers, who recently found the remains of thirty members of the ill-fated Franklin expedition. Schwatka and Bill have been in three different expeditions together, one as chief of scouts, and the other as lieutenant in the regular army, and both under Gen. Crook.

The following story was told to me by the Lieutenant,

who regards Bill with a friendship which he delights in : During the expedition of 1874 in the Big Horn country, when Gen. Crook was operating against the Sioux, the command had pitched camp in the cañons, where they were momentarily expecting an attack. Buffalo Bill, as chief of scouts, being well acquainted with the country and the peculiarities of the Indians, was given practical command of the Snake Indians, who were co-operating with the expedition. One night Bill selected one of the friendly Indians to act as corporal of the guard, giving him minute instructions to call the guard every two hours and send a relief. In order to give the Indian a better idea of the time, Bill gave him his watch, saying :

“Now, take this watch, and hold it in your hand ; when the big hand goes around twice and the little one moves two figures, that will show you two hours have passed, and you must then put out a new guard.”

The Indian, having never before seen a watch, was so pleased with it that he assured Bill he understood his instructions,—being anxious to look at the attractive plaything, as he considered it.

Taking a position by the camp-fire, the Indian held the watch carefully in his hand, listened to its ticking, and then watched the hands. After spending five or six hours in this manner he lost all interest in the watch, and going over to Bill's tent, he awakened him and said :

“D—n Melican man ; him fool Indian long time” (pointing to the watch) ; “big hand all right, but little hand, him d—n tired,” and threw the watch to Bill.

The Indian had got the information badly mixed, thinking that both hands of the watch should make the circuit of the dial in the same time, and becoming disgusted with the “tired” movement of the smaller hand, he thought Bill had been playing a trick on him ; he therefore refused to act as corporal any longer.

During the same expedition the Lieutenant and Bill left camp one afternoon to bathe in the Sweetwater. While they were in the stream the Lieutenant discovered a sagehen in the brush on the bank, and as fresh meat had become an exceedingly scarce article in that section, the two were very anxious to kill the bird. They had but one pistol between them, and both wanted to do the shooting, trusting in their respective abilities to kill the hen. The Lieutenant, however, secured the first shot, but missed. Bill then grabbed the pistol, saying, "You can't shoot for cold beans; I'll show you how to profit by this opportunity." Taking fair aim, Bill fired, but he also missed. He considered the miss an accident, however, and refusing to give the Lieutenant another chance, he kept firing until the six chambers of the pistol were emptied without touching the bird. Incensed at his bad shooting, he then hurled the pistol at the bird and—lucky circumstance—killed it! This joke has been following Buffalo Bill ever since the return of the expedition, and it will probably dog his trails so long as he continues to be a crack shot.

While I was in North Platte I heard another excellent joke on Bill, which furnishes too strong a temptation for me to resist relating: It is well known that he is the most liberal giver in Nebraska. Although far from being a church-goer, he nevertheless, contributes to the church with a wonderful liberality. When the first fine church building was completed in North Platte, propositions were made for opening it with grand dedicatory ceremonies. Mrs. Cody was anxious to have her husband attend, and continued to persuade him until he consented—not, however, until he had warned her that he was almost certain to make a "bad break in meeting."

In opening the song service the choir occupied a choral

gallery in the front part of the church, and the leader chanced to be a lady who, while she was an excellent organist, had a screechy voice tuned in so high a key that no one could follow her. Nevertheless it devolved on her to start the tune, both by voice and instrument. She began :

“My soul’s in arms—ten thousand foes arise ;”

but she saw the key was pitched up about seven octaves above the door-step of heaven, so she halted a moment, and again started :

“My soul’s in arms—ten thousand foes arise.”

But she got it down not more than a single note, which left the other portion of the choir and audience on their tip-toes, and even then they wanted several feet of reaching the summit of the air. Bill turned half-way round in his seat, and looking up toward the aerial singer, cried, “Start it at five thousand, and maybe we can get in.” The audience were unable to control their risibilities, while Bill accepted his wife’s invitation to retire.

Such jokes as these are numerous as blades of prairie grass about North Platte, Buffalo Bill always figuring as the chief character. I never enjoyed a visit so much as the brief one I paid Buffalo Bill, and not more to him than to his most estimable and handsome wife am I indebted for courtesies which I shall ever regard as souvenirs of a jolly time in North Platte.

Buffalo Bill is still conducting his successful theatrical combination, and for the season of 1881-82 is playing the “Prairie Waif” and “Knight of the Plains.” With his troupe of twenty-four artists are four Winnebago chiefs, and Dr. Frank Powell, the great medicine man of the Sioux tribe.





(Harper's Weekly.)

California Joe.



# LIFE OF CALIFORNIA JOE.

---

## CHAPTER I.

THE Man in the Iron Mask and the author of the Junius letters are the great unsolved personalities of history ; but while a comparison between these and California Joe would appear, in some degree, ridiculous to the æsthetic student of human nature, yet in so far as identity alone is concerned they were not altogether unlike ; though the character of the Wandering Jew would afford an altogether more appropriate resemblance when considering alone the odd traits and singular adventures of this great plainsman.

Who was California Joe? This question many may consider themselves able to answer, but no one, perhaps, can distinguish between the California Joes who have figured in so many escapades attributed to this enigmatic character, for there has been more than one person to adopt the title. Where was he born? No one will attempt to answer. The California Joe who hunted, trailed, fought and slept beside Gen. Custer and Buffalo Bill is believed to have been a native of Kentucky. Buffalo Bill maintains that his real name was Joseph Milmer, while Capt. Payne declares that his name was Joseph Hawkins, and, as a further proof of the claim, asserts that Joe was a distant relative of Daniel Boone, and also his (Payne's) third cousin. We are only able to say,

therefore, that California Joe was singularly reticent concerning his early life, and died at last with his full identity unsolved. For what facts I here present concerning his life I am indebted to Buffalo Bill and Capt. Payne, and it is this reason which has prompted me to respect the opinions of each by giving their assertions, not, however, with any desire to involve them in any further discussion concerning Joe's real name.

The first thrilling adventure in which California Joe participated, of which I have any information, may be described as follows :

In the summer of 1849 a party of sixty-five hardy adventurers from Kentucky, with California Joe as their leader, attempted an overland journey to California, being impelled by the golden stories of newly discovered wealth along the San Juan. They proceeded without interruption for several weeks, when they reached a cañon near Pueblo. Here a camp was made just before night-fall, and as the party had never been initiated into the perils of Indian treachery, they did not consider the importance of anticipating and guarding against an attack from these prairie nomads.

During the still hours of night, when the entire party was sound in slumber, perchance dreaming of vast treasures and the exaggerated blessings which wealth provides, a band of two hundred vindictive Cheyennes descended, like wolves upon the fold, from the hillsides, and poured into the camp before there was even a suspicion of their proximity. Lance and arrow, tomahawk and war club, soon destroyed the bright dreams, the golden anticipations, and out of the party of sixty-five only two escaped, one of whom was California Joe, but even he was badly wounded. (Two persons who were well acquainted with Joe during his life assert that his wife and two little boys were killed at the same time.)

In the darkness of the night Joe succeeded in eluding the savages while they were mutilating and dancing over the bodies of his dead comrades, and crawling to the Arkansas River, one mile distant, embarked on a log, upon which he floated down to Ft. Lyon, where he was taken out of the water and cared for.

Although this, his first experience on the plains, had been tempered with sore adventure, it was scarcely two months after this event when he again attempted the overland trip to California. He had with him this time but two companions, and having been chastened for his lack of precaution, he now fully appreciated the fruits of that lesson. A guard was therefore constantly maintained, but even this did not avail against what appeared a decree of bitter fate.

The three were attacked by twenty-five Utahs, as they were passing through the gateway of the Rocky Mountains, and after a bitter struggle Joe's comrades were killed and himself taken prisoner. The Indians bound him securely on a pony, after which they started off northward with their prisoner. The terrible forebodings which his helpless condition prompted as he rode silently beside his cruel captors, as Joe afterward expressed it, was "tearin' to a sinner's soul."

Just before dark the Indians halted in a valley beside Green River and then deliberately began to make preparations for punishing their victim. Joe was first taken from the pony he had been riding and laid upon the grass, where he was watched by a single warrior, while the others busied themselves gathering dry wood, which they piled in a circle about a tree.

The fiendish intentions of his enemies were now revealed to Joe, for these preparations he knew meant *death at the stake*. Seeing that his life was to end in

torture, he made a desperate effort to free himself, hoping that his actions would cause some of the Indians to kill him at once, but knowing their captive to be well bound the savages gave no heed to his writhings.

When the circle of wood was completed and ready for lighting, the savages carried their victim to the tree, and despite his struggles, bound him fast, his back being drawn tightly against the trunk of the tree. The sacrifice now being prepared, one of the Indians, who was evidently a chief, drew a large knife, with which he cut off the outer rim of each of Joe's ears, placing the bleeding flesh inside his beautifully beaded belt.

When this part of the ceremony was concluded, the Indians executed a war dance around their victim, in order, no doubt, to torture him with the dread anticipation of his approaching fate.

Darkness now had fairly settled down, as if to hide the dark and dreadful deed, and accepting this pall of nature as the most opportune time for their hellish design, the circle of wood was lighted in a dozen places, after which the Indians sat down around the fire, filled their pipes and entered upon the full enjoyment of the barbecue.

As the fire had been intentionally placed a little distance from Joe's feet, in order that he might first feel its discomforting heat, thereby prolonging the torture, he had time to yell vigorously, this being his only hope of rescue from sudden death, considering all the while a possibility of so provoking the Indians that they would kill him outright.

His lusty shouts, together with the illumination on the clouds from the fire about him, by extraordinary good fortune, attracted the attention of a party of trappers, who chanced to be camped on Green River, within less



CALIFORNIA JOE AT THE STAKE.



than half a mile from the place where Joe was being sacrificed. Knowing that something was wrong, the trappers, fifty in number, rushed down toward the spot indicated by the cries, and approaching carefully they discovered the situation. With a deadly volley from their rifles, twelve Indians dropped over dead with smoking pipes in their hands. Another volley followed swiftly after the first, and when the trappers rushed to the rescue of Joe they found eighteen savages ready for the scalping. Poor fellow! the fire had wrinkled his buckskin clothes, and so burnt the skin on his lower limbs that large pieces fell off; though the pain he suffered was most excruciating, yet the injuries were not of a serious character. He was taken to the trappers' camp and treated with all the consideration and kindness friends are capable of giving. Upon his recovery, some weeks after his wonderful escape from the most horrible of deaths, Joe became associated with the party in their occupation, and followed trapping for more than a year in the company of his rescuers.

---

## CHAPTER II .

CALIFORNIA JOE's courtship and marriage, as told by himself, and repeated in sweet, pathetic story by one of nature's noblemen, Capt. Jack Crawford, is unquestionably one of the most sympathetic and lovingly sorrowful recitals that was ever created by imagination or found in any of the peculiar phases of human life. Its reproduction here will thrill the hearts of every lover of the most noble instincts of nature, and perhaps bring tears to the

eyes of many, moved by that fellow-feeling which establishes a universal kinship among mankind :

Well, mates, I don't like stories,  
Nor am I going to act  
A part around this camp fire  
That ain't a truthful fact.  
So fill your pipes and listen,  
I'll tell you—let me see,  
I think it was in fifty,  
From that till sixty-three.

You've all heard tell of Bridger?  
I used to run with Jim,  
And many a hard day's scouting  
I've done 'longside of him.  
Well, once, near old Fort Reno,  
A trapper used to dwell ;  
We called him old Pap Reynolds—  
The scouts all knew him well.

One night—the spring of fifty—  
We camped on Powder River ;  
We killed a calf of buffalo,  
And cooked a slice of liver ;  
While eating, quite contented,  
We heard three shots or four ;  
Put out the fire and listened,  
Then heard a dozen more.

We knew that old man Reynolds  
Had moved his traps up here ;  
So, picking up our rifles,  
And fixing on our gear,



We mounted quick as lightnin'—  
To save was our desire.

Too late ; the painted heathens  
Had set the house on fire.

We tied our horses quickly,  
And waded up the stream :  
While close beside the water  
I heard a muffled scream,  
And there among the bushes,  
A little girl did lie ;  
I picked her up and whispered,  
*"I'll save you, or I'll die!"*

Lord, what a ride ! old Bridger,  
He covered my retreat,  
Sometimes the child would whisper,  
In voice so low and sweet,  
"Poor papa ! God will take him  
To mamma up above ;  
There's no one left to love me—  
There's no one left to love."

The little one was thirteen,  
And I was twenty-two.  
Said I : "I'll be your father,  
And love you just as true."  
She nestled to my bosom,  
Her hazel eyes so bright,  
Looked up and made me happy,  
Though close pursued that night.

A month had passed, and Maggie,  
(We called her Hazel-Eye),

In truth, was going to leave me—  
Was going to say “good-bye.”  
Her uncle, mad Jack Reynolds—  
Reported long since dead—  
Had come to claim my angel,  
His brother’s child, he said.

What could I say? We parted.  
Mad Jack was growing old;  
I handed him a bank-note,  
And all I had in gold.  
They rode away at sunrise,  
I went a mile or two,  
And, parting, said: “We’ll meet again—  
May God watch over you.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Beside a laughing, dancing brook,  
A little cabin stood,  
As, weary with a long day’s scout,  
I spied it in the wood.  
A pretty valley stretched beyond,  
The mountains towered above,  
While near the willow bank I heard  
The cooing of a dove.

’Twas one grand panorama;  
The brook was plainly seen,  
Like a long thread of silver  
In a cloth of lovely green.  
The laughter of the waters,  
The cooing of the dove,  
Was like some painted picture—  
Some well-told tale of love.

While drinking in the grandeur,  
And resting in my saddle,  
I heard a gentle ripple,  
Like the dipping of a paddle.  
I turned toward the eddy—  
A strange sight met my view :  
A maiden, with her rifle,  
In a little bark canoe.

She stood up in the centre,  
The rifle to her eye ;  
I thought (just for a second)  
My time had come to die.  
I doffed my hat and told her  
(If it was all the same)  
To drop her little shooter,  
For I was not her game.

She dropped the deadly weapon,  
And leaped from the canoe.  
Said she : "I beg your pardon,  
I thought you were a Sioux ;  
Your long hair and your buckskin  
Looked warrior-like and rough ;  
My bead was spoiled by sunshine,  
Or I'd killed you, sure enough."

"Perhaps it had been better  
You dropped me then," said I ;  
"For surely such an angel  
Would bear me to the sky."  
She blushed and dropped her eyelids :  
Her cheeks were crimson red ;  
One half-shy glance she gave me,  
And then hung down her head.

I took her little hand in mine—  
She wondered what I meant,  
And yet she drew it not away,  
But rather seemed content.  
We sat upon the mossy bank—  
Her eyes began to fill—  
The brook was rippling at our feet,  
The dove was cooing still.

I smoothed the golden tresses,  
Her eyes looked up in mine.  
She seemed in doubt—then whispered :  
“ ’Tis such a long, long time  
Strong arms were thrown around me—  
*I'll save you, or I'll die.*”  
I clasped her to my bosom—  
My long-lost Hazel-Eye.

The rapture of that moment  
Was almost heaven to me ;  
I kissed her 'mid her tear-drops,  
Her innocence and glee ;  
Her heart near mine was beating,  
While sobbingly she said :  
“ My dear, my brave preserver,  
They told me you were dead.  
  
“ But, oh ! those parting words, Joe,  
Have never left my mind,  
You said : ‘ We'll meet again, Mag,’  
Then rode off like the wind ;  
And, oh ! how I have prayed, Joe,  
For you, who saved my life,  
That God would send an angel  
To guard you through all strife.

“And he who claimed me from you,  
My uncle, good and true—  
Now sick in yonder cabin—  
Has talked so much of you.  
‘If Joe were living, darling,’  
He said to me last night,  
‘He would care for Maggie,  
When God puts out my light.’”

We found the old man sleeping.  
“Hush! Maggie, let him rest.”  
The sun was slowly sinking  
In the far-off glowing west;  
And tho’ we talked in whispers,  
He opened wide his eyes,  
“A dream—a dream!” he murmured,  
“Alas! a dream of lies!”

She drifted like a shadow  
To where the old man lay,  
“You had a dream, dear uncle,  
Another dream to-day?”  
“Oh, yes; I saw an angel,  
As pure as mountain snow,  
And near her, at my bedside,  
Stood California Joe.”

“I’m sure *I’m* not an angel,  
Dear uncle, that you know;  
These arms are brown, my hands, too—  
*My* face is not like snow;  
Now, listen while I tell you,  
For I have news to cheer,  
And Hazel-Eye is happy,  
For Joe is truly here.”

And when a few days after,  
 The old man said to me,  
 "Joe, boy, *she* ar' a angel,  
 An' good as angels be ;  
 For three long months she's hunted  
 An' trapped an' nurs'd me, too ;  
 God bless ye, boy ! I believe it—  
 She's safe along wi' you."

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

The sun was slowly sinking,  
 When Mag (my wife) and I  
 Came riding through the valley,  
 The tear-drops in her eye,  
 "One year ago, to-day, Joe—  
 I see the mossy grave—  
 We laid him 'neath the daisies,  
 My uncle, good and brave."

And, comrades, every spring-time  
 Was sure to find me there—  
 A something in that valley  
 Was always fresh and fair ;  
 Our loves were newly kindled  
 While sitting by the stream,  
 Where two hearts were united  
 In love's sweet, happy dream.

There is another part to this beautiful story, founded as it is on fact, which, owing to its singular harmony with the sentiment expressed in this poem of Capt. Jack's, further illustrates the large-hearted devotion of California Joe, and ought therefore to be added. It is as follows :

An old trapper named Reynolds, one of the very first white men that ever set foot in the Black Hills country,

had settled on the Yellowstone with his large family of children, among the number being a very beautiful little girl eleven years of age, whose name was Maggie. She was not only of a winsome figure, lovely in feature and disposition, but also very precocious for one of her age. Young as she was, nothing so charmed her youthful ambition as the chase. With a rifle, the very weight of which was a burden scarcely to be borne by such tender shoulders, she day after day scouted in the vicinity of the old cabin, killing deer and even attacking more dangerous game, such as bears and wolves.

One day little Maggie went hunting, as usual, never straying far from home, but when night drew on apace she had not returned. The mother became somewhat anxious at her daughter's prolonged absence; but when darkness fell, and the hours of night sped by one after another, anxiety grew into alarm and a search was instituted. Father, mother, brothers, all joined in the hunt, each calling aloud, from time to time, the name of the lost one, but no response came. This search was continued for several days and until the distracted parents finally concluded that the child had either been carried off and devoured by some wild animal, or had been kidnapped by the Indians, the latter supposition occurring to them as more reasonable.

Some months after this sad occurrence, California Joe while trapping on the Yellowstone, visited old man Reynolds, and during this visit was made acquainted with the circumstances of little Maggie's strange disappearance. He at once exclaimed:

"I'll bet a silver fox's skin that that ar gal is now with them thar tarnal Cheyennes; 'fact I already hearn thar was a white face 'mong them wretches."

Hearing this assertion, Mrs. Reynolds began to lament,

but between her sobs of grief she pleadingly inquired if there were any means by which her daughter could be rescued.

"Yer bet thar is," replied Joe, "and more than that, Mrs. Reynolds, I'll just undertake to find her myself."

Joe remained over night with the Reynolds family, but on the following morning at an early hour, he gathered up his rifle and bidding them good bye, set off in search of the little girl.

He proceeded to a spot where he knew a party of Cheyennes were encamped, with whom he had done some trading only a few days before. Finding the Indians, he selected four of the tribe he was best acquainted with, and after treating them to a large bottle of frontier whisky, he made a contract (stipulating more fire-water) with the savage quartette for the restoration of the child. These four Indians set out directly to find a large village of their tribe located near the headwaters of the Missouri. They not only succeeded in finding their red brothers, but getting into camp it was not long ere they also discovered the little pale face in the custody of an old squaw who was using Maggie as a servant.

By skillful insinuation they at length managed to communicate with the little girl, and acquainted her with their purpose, arranging at the same time to meet her on the Missouri river bank at midnight with a canoe, to carry her out of the village. The arrangement succeeded most admirably, as the girl, young as she was, employed so much care and cunning that she stole away from the side of her sleeping guard and got out of the tepee without discovery. She then hastened to the trysting place, where she was received by the four waiting Indians, who conveyed her down the river in their canoe to a spot designated by California Joe.



The girl was missed very soon after her escape from the village, and ten of the Cheyennes started out at once to effect her recapture, but though they made directly toward old man Reynolds' cabin, Joe had preceded them



so far that Maggie was restored to her overjoyed parents before the Indians arrived. When they came up to the cabin, intending to forcibly retake the girl, they were met by a volley of bullets from deadly rifles in the hands

of Joe and Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds, the latter being a true frontiersman's wife, knowing how to shoot as well as most crack shots. A lively fight ensued, but protected by the cabin, the party inside sustained no injury, while they succeeded in killing five of the Indians. The country, however, had now become too dangerous for a longer residence on the Yellowstone, and the Reynolds family speedily abandoned their home and fled southward with Joe to the North Platte.

It has been asserted that California Joe married the little girl he had thus rescued, six years afterward, but it is possible that the name of the girl, Maggie, being the same as that of his wife, gave rise to this belief. The circumstances, as here related, concerning the rescue of Reynolds' daughter, are undoubtedly true, but that he married this same girl afterward is scarcely worthy of belief. Joe himself related the story of his marriage to Capt. Jack, who undoubtedly truthfully repeated it in the beautiful verses already quoted.

---

### CHAPTER III.

IN 1857 California Joe removed to Oregon, where he continued trapping and prospecting until the civil war broke out, when he returned to the States, and shortly afterward joined Berdan's sharpshooters, among whom he was regarded as far the most skillful marksman in that arm of the service.

The following incident is told of him by a war correspondent of *Harper's Weekly* in reporting the first siege of Richmond in 1862:

"A rebel sharpshooter had been amusing himself and annoying the General and other officers by firing several times in that direction, and sending the bullets in unpleasant proximity to their heads.

"My man, can't you get your piece on that fellow who is firing on us, and stop his impertinence?" asked the General.

"I think so," replied Joe; and he brought his telescopic rifle to a horizontal position.

"Do you see him?" inquired the General.

"I do."

"How far is he away?"

"Fifteen hundred yards."

"Can you fetch him?"

"I'll try."

"And Joe did try. He brought his piece to a steady aim, pulled the trigger, and sent the bullet whizzing on its experimental tour, the officers meanwhile looking through their field glasses. Joe evidently hit the fellow in the leg or foot, for he went hobbling up the hill on one leg and two hands, in a style of locomotion that was amusing."

The picture of California Joe given at the commencement of this sketch, is from a photograph taken during the siege of Yorktown, by Harper's special artist, and represents him in his position picking off the Confederate gunners. The personality and situation are therefore true to life.

At the close of the war Joe became connected with Gen. Curtis, for whom he trailed and did guide service for several years, following him in the Wachita campaign, and afterward with the command scouting through Nebraska and Dakotah. In Gen. Custer's work, "My Life on the Plains," that gallant officer gives the follow-

ing description of Joe, having reference to the time when his command was operating against Black Kettle, in the Wachita mountains :

“In concentrating the cavalry which had hitherto been operating in small bodies, it was found that each detachment brought with it the scouts who had been serving with them. When I joined the command I found quite a number of these scouts attached to various portions of the cavalry, but each acting separately. For the purpose of organization it was deemed best to unite them in a separate detachment under command of one of their own number. Being unacquainted with the merits or demerits of any of them, the selection of a chief had to be made somewhat at random.

“There was one among their number whose appearance would have attracted the notice of any casual observer. He was a man about forty years of age, perhaps older, over six feet in height, and possessing a well proportioned frame. His head was covered with a luxuriant crop of long, almost black hair, strongly inclined to curl, and so long as to fall carelessly over his shoulders. His face, at least so much of it as was not concealed by the long, waving brown beard and moustache, was full of intelligence and pleasant to look upon. His eye was undoubtedly handsome, black and lustrous, with an expression of kindness and mildness combined. On his head was generally to be seen, whether awake or asleep, a huge sombrero, or black slouch hat. A soldier's overcoat, with its large circular cape, a pair of trousers with the legs tucked in the top of his long boots, usually constituted the make-up of the man whom I selected as chief scout. He was known by the euphonious title of ‘California Joe;’ no other name seemed ever to have been given him, and no other name appeared to be necessary.

His military armament consisted of a long, breech-loading Springfield musket, from which he was inseparable, and a revolver and hunting-knife, both the latter being carried in his waist-belt. His mount completed his equipment for the field, being, instead of a horse, a finely formed mule, in whose speed and endurance he had every confidence.

\* \* \* \* \*

“California Joe was an inveterate smoker, and was rarely seen without his stubby, dingy-looking briarwood pipe in full blast. The endurance of his smoking powers was only surpassed by his loquacity. His pipe frequently became exhausted and required filling, but California Joe seemed never to lack for material or disposition to carry on a conversation, principally concerning personal adventures among the Indians, episodes in mining life, or experience in overland journeying before the days of steam engines and palace cars rendered a trip across the plains a comparatively uneventful one. It was evident from the scraps of information volunteered from time to time, that there was but little of the Western country, from the Pacific ocean to the Missouri river, with which California Joe was not intimately acquainted. He had lived in Oregon years before, and had become acquainted from time to time with most of the officers who had served on the plains or on the Pacific coast. I once inquired of him if he had ever seen General Sheridan. He answered:

“‘What! General Sheridan? Why, bless my soul, I knowed Sheridan away up in Oregon more’n fifteen years ago, and he wuz only a second lieutenant uv infantry. He was quartermaster uv the foot, er suthin’ o’ that sort, an’ I hed the contract fer furnishin’ wood to the post, an’, would yer b’leve it? I hed a kind uv a sneakin’ notion that he’d hurt sombody ef they’d ever turn him loose. Lord, but ain’t he old lightnin’!’

"This was the man whom, upon a short acquaintance, I decided to appoint as chief of the scouts."

\* \* \* \* \*

"As the four detachments already referred to were to move as soon as it was dark, it was desirable that the scouts should be at once organized and assigned. So, sending for California Joe, I informed him of his promotion and what was expected of him and his men. After this official portion of the interview had been completed, it seemed proper to Joe's mind that a more intimate acquaintance between us should be cultivated, as we had never met before. His first interrogatory, addressed to me in furtherance of this idea, was frankly put as follows :

" ' See hyar, Ginerall, in order thet we hev no misonderstandin' I'd jist like ter ax ye a few questions. First, are ye an ambulance man er a hoss man ? ' "

" ' Professing ignorance of his meaning, I requested him to explain.

" ' ' I mean,' said he, ' do yer b'lieve in catchin' Injuns in ambulances or on hossback ? ' "

" ' Still assuming ignorance, I replied, ' Well, Joe, I believe in catching Indians wherever we can find them, whether they are found in ambulances or on horseback. ' "

" ' ' Thet ain't what I'm a drivin' at,' he responded. ' S'pose you're after Injuns and really want to hev a tussle with 'em, would yer start after 'em on hossback er would yer climb inter a ambulance and be hauled after 'em ? Thet's the pint I'm a headin' fer. ' "

" ' I answered that I would prefer the method on horseback, provided I really desired to catch the Indians ; but if I wished them to catch me, I would adopt the ambulance system of attack.

" ' ' You've hit the nail squar on the head,' said he, ' I've

bin with 'em on the plains whar they started out after Injuns on wheels jist as ef they war goin' to a town funeral in ther States, an' they stood 'bout as many chances uv catchin' Injuns ez a six-mule team would uv catchin' a pack of thievin' ki-o-tes, jist as much. Why, thet sort uv work iz only fun fer the Injuns ; they don't want anything better. Yer ort to 've seed how they peppered it to us, and we a doin' o' nuthin' all the time. Sum uv 'em wuz afraid the mules war goin' to stampede an run off with ther train and all our forage an' grub, but thet wuz impossible ; fer besides the big loads uv corn an' bacon an' baggage the wagons hed in 'em, thar war from eight to a dozen infantry men piled into 'em besides. Yer ort to hev heard the quartermaster in charge uv the train tryin' to drive the infantry men out uv the wagons and git them into ther fight. I 'spect he wuz a Irishman, by his talk, fer he said to 'em : "Git out uv thim wagons ; get out uv thim wagons ; yez'll hev me thried fer disobadiance uv orders for marchin' tin min in a wagon whin I've ordhers fer but ait."'''

I have quoted somewhat liberally from Gen. Custer, because that which is repeated above affords an excellent basis upon which to form an opinion of California Joe's unique peculiarities. Old Joe was, however, of so much importance that Custer devotes several pages of his book to a rehearsal of the droll adventures of this singular character.

After Custer's fight with Black Kettle, in which a great victory was gained, breaking the power of the Cheyennes completely, California Joe was selected as courier to carry the report back to Gen. Sheridan, whose headquarters were at Camp Supply. The journey was not more than one hundred miles, but it was through a country literally beset with revengeful Indians. Black Kettle's

forces were, of course, dispersed in the battle and had divided up into small parties so as to facilitate their escape; they had back-tracked in order to again reach the game country of the Indian Nation, and of this fact Custer was well aware when he requested Joe to carry the dispatches, tendering him at the same time, a cavalry escort of fifty men. Custer was, therefore, very much surprised to hear Joe say that he wanted no escort and that the only companion he desired on the trip was his "pardner," Jack Corbin, whose peculiar characteristic was extreme taciturnity, the very opposite of Joe, whose loquaciousness was almost phenomenal. It was a singular attachment which bound these two men together, doubtless the desire of one to do all the talking while the other was contented only while doing all the listening. But whatever constituted the bond of friendship between them it was of a material of great strength.

These two men, Joe and Corbin, set out from Custer's camping place at nightfall and reached Camp Supply in less than twenty-four hours, though they had to make several wide circuits to avoid the Indians. Delivering the dispatches to Sheridan, they received a message for Custer in reply, and with a change of animals, returned to the latter's camp in just forty-eight hours from the time of their departure.

During the operations of Custer in the Wachita Mountains, and after the defeat of Black Kettle, while the command was encamped, California Joe, Capt. D. L. Payne and four of the soldiers went out several miles from camp for a bear hunt. While riding up a cañon just across the boundary line of New Mexico, Joe, who was in advance, espied seven Indians approaching up the same cañon in single file. In an instant he threw himself sideways off his mule, which action was followed by



the rest of his party. Payne, not having observed the Indians, and thinking that Joe had seen a bear, eagerly inquired :

“Where is it, Joe?”

“Look around that thar boulder and down ther cañon ; thar’s seven uv ’em,” was his reply.

Payne made the examination as directed, and then seeing the Indians, remarked :

“Those are Indians, Joe, and perhaps they are coming in to surrender themselves, or make peace. What do you propose doing?”

“What do I p’rpose ter do? Why, I p’rpose to take thar scalps ; we’ll jist drop behind this here boulder, an’ when they come up we’ll bag ’em, hide an’ all.”

“No, no, Joe, that isn’t right ; we ought to first decide whether they are hostiles or not ; the fact is, I believe they are peaceable Indians, or else they would not be riding so leisurely this near Custer’s camp.”

“Look a hyar, Cap, when I make up my mind to kill Injuns no man can pervent me,” replied Joe, and quickly dropping his pistol so as to cover Capt. Payne in a vital spot, he concluded the sentence by saying, “an’ ef I find it necessary I’ll have ter drop yer first ; yer jist keep right still, er off goes yer brain-pan.”

“All right, Joe,” Payne answered, “you have the drop on me, but I am not afraid to tackle you in a fair way, even chances, if you are sufficiently offended by my protest to want satisfaction. However, if the majority of the boys favor killing the Indians, then I am satisfied to do my part of it.”

The soldiers favored Joe’s proposition, and they therefore awaited the approach, with guns ready. When the savages came within about thirty-five yards of the ambush, Payne noticed that the pony ridden by the leading Indian

began to sniff and throw his ears forward, which they invariably do when catching the first scent of a white man.

"Now is your time, or we will be detected," and with this remark the six turned loose their rifles, dropping as many Indians, and as the seventh and last one turned to run, another shot wounded his pony and he was thus placed at the mercy of Joe. But the quality of that mercy was quickly illustrated, for in a moment a ball from the old scout's rifle penetrated the warrior's brain, and then there was work for the scalping knife.

Joe, with a wave of his hand, said: "Now look a hyar, boys, you can have the fixtures, but the scalps ar' mine." He then drew his large hunting knife, and mechanically raising the head of each dead Indian, one at a time, he dexterously cut out a large circular piece of scalp and hair, crumpling each scalp into his waist-belt as it was extirpated.

This adventure terminated the hunt, and they returned to camp with the trophies of their conquest. Shortly afterward the command was ordered to Ft. Hays, and there Joe sold his seven scalps to curiosity lovers, and scouts who were ambitious for the reputation of Indian killers, at the rate of five dollars each.

---

## CHAPTER IV.

CALIFORNIA JOE was a born hunter, trapper and guide, but he seldom followed either of these employments for any considerable length of time, rather pursuing them in rotation as if to extract all the enjoyment that was to



CALIFORNIA JOE ATTACKED BY A PANTHER.

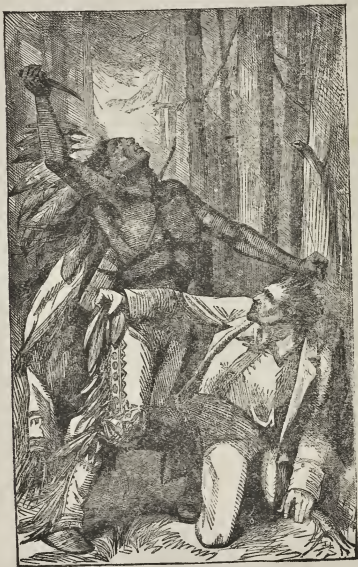


be found in all. So from Ft. Hays he went to New Mexico to kill game for the outlying posts of that section. It was while thus engaged that he met with a most singular adventure, and one which came near terminating his usefulness for anything save wolf bait.

Passing under a ledge of large boulders, which were covered with a profusion of tropical vegetation, an immense Mexican cougar, or spotted panther, that had evidently been living in an enforced fast until hunger had made it fearless, sprang from its covert and lighted squarely on Joe's back. That it meant to devour him was evidenced by the manner of attack. The animal fastened its teeth deep into the flesh at the base of Joe's neck, and with terrific growls began its desperate work, rending his back and ripping his sides with its stiletto-like claws.

The force with which the animal struck Joe, when it bounded upon his back, knocked his rifle several feet distant, leaving him with only his large knife for defense; but this he used with such excellent results, notwithstanding the awkward position he was forced to assume, that he disemboweled the voracious cougar and almost cut it in two before the animal's hold was broken. He killed the powerful beast, but his own injuries were of the most serious character, and but for his great knowledge of the medicinal virtues contained in several plants in convenient proximity, he would surely have died of his wounds. He was still able to secure the plants needed, from which he prepared a balsamic poultice with which he bound up his neck, the properties of the plants being to stay the flow of blood and absorb the poison which always appears after the bite of an animal. But when the wound healed a very large and prominent scar remained, which marked him until his death.

In 1875 California Joe and Jack Corbin, his old partner, went to the Black Hills to try their luck in gold mining. They built a small cabin at a point where the indications were good, but after digging for some time without reaching pay dirt, they



California Joe Saves his Friend.

started another prospect hole about five miles further up the mountains. Here their work was prosecuted with much vigor and some profit. On one occasion Joe had gone back to the cabin for some blasting powder, all their heavy articles being stored at that place, leaving Corbin alone for the time being. Upon his return, and when within a short distance of the prospect hole, Joe heard his partner shouting for help. He rushed forward with all possible speed, and just as he reached an opening commanding a view of the spot where the mine was being put down, he saw Corbin down upon one knee battling with a large, powerful Sioux Indian, whose knife was being uplifted for a fatal plunge. It was scarcely an instant, so quick, in fact, that the knife had not begun to descend, when Joe raised his rifle and sent a ball crashing through the Indian's heart.

After his marvelous rescue from death, Corbin related to Joe the circumstances of the attack substantially as follows:

"I was working on the shale at the side of the pit, and just as I came to the top for the purpose of emptying the bucket, before I had a suspicion of an Indian's presence, this fellow (poking the dead Indian with his foot) leaped on me, and as his strength was far greater than my own, I was borne to the ground and had to fight with my bare hands to prevent him from stabbing me. I maintained this unequal contest for several minutes, keeping hold of his wrists, with all my might, shouting for you all the while, for I felt that unless assistance came soon my doom was sealed. At length he released his right hand, and was in the attitude you saw him when that blessed bullet from old 'never fail' picked me up out of the very jaws of death."

Some weeks after this incident another move was made

in search of better paying dirt, the next location being on the side of an adjacent mountain about the same distance (five miles) from their cabin. It was customary for the two miners to carry their provisions and cooking utensils with them on a small burro, so that they were not compelled to return to the cabin at the close of each day's work, especially as the weather was so delightful as to permit a comfortable sleep on the ground, where, in fact, it was cooler, and therefore more pleasant, than down in the valley where their cabin was situated.

Corbin was sent over to Custer City after new supplies, shortly after their last location was made, and during his absence California Joe, being unable to work in the pit without assistance, concluded to prospect over the adjoining district, entertaining a hope that he might make some great discovery by which to surprise Corbin on his return. So, packing his patient little burro, he set out up the mountain side, carrying his rifle and pistol with him. After searching for some time he found what appeared to be excellent surface indications of gold, and here he tied his little pack animal and began to work with his pick.

In working around over the various places he left his gun lying on the ground some distance from him. Pretty soon his attention was attracted by an "Ugh! White man!" the voice and sound of which immediately apprised him of an Indian's presence. Joe quickly grasped his pistol, but before turning round looked over his shoulder and saw an Indian holding his (Joe's) gun, and looking at him with a very demure countenance, while some distance in the background were two others watching the proceedings. Knowing with what dread the Indians regarded him, Joe spoke out:

"Ugh! white man, yes; California Joe. Come on fight."



By this time Joe had his pistol presented, while the Indian, profoundly astonished at meeting an adversary



of such known powers, changed his demeanor, and advancing, proffered Joe his hand. Instead of attacking

him as they had intended, the Indians made many overtures of friendship, and returning Joe's gun, they soon afterward departed. The first Indian, who had crept up and secured the gun, evidently believed that he could intimidate the owner, who was left with nothing but a pistol to fight three Indians; but the magic in the name of "California Joe" changed their purpose.

This wonderful dread of one man, and of California Joe in particular, was illustrated before, in 1869, as will be found related in the life of Captain Payne, whose escape from a frightful death was due entirely to the belief entertained by a large body of Indians who had surrounded him and two others, that one of his comrades was California Joe.

---

## CHAPTER V.

DURING Gen. Crook's expedition to the Big Horn country, California Joe proffered his services, which were gladly accepted. All the regular army boys were warmly attached to him on account of his droll character and excellent fighting qualities, and when he came into camp they gave him a genuine ovation. Buffalo Bill was a special favorite of Joe's and to be with him Joe would sacrifice almost any interest. The principal reasons for this attachment were found in the rollicking freedom, generosity, true grit, and infectious good humor of Bill, and chiefly, it may also be added, because of Bill's extraordinary good skirmishing and nosing qualities for "sour mash," of which grain extraction Joe was passionately fond. As Bill would divide his last cent with a comrade,

he was no less noted for dividing his last "drop" with a friend, and Joe was always a solicitor for that "drop." After the command reached the Big Horn mountains and was moving in daily expectation of meeting the Sioux, Bill called Joe to his tent one evening while they were in camp, and said:

"Joe, now you have been with this expedition for more than two weeks without being on the pay-roll. General Crook is glad to have your services, and there is no reason that I know of why you cannot be regularly engaged as a scout, and thus draw a salary of five dollars per day. If you would like the service I will see Crook and have you engaged. What do you say to the proposition?"

"Oh, I don't know 'bout this here scoutin' with Crook; 'pears to me I wouldn't jist like it," replied Joe.

"Well, I don't see what your objection is; it is only your own interest that I have in view; the service is well organized and Crook is a splendid officer. What is the trouble?" Bill urged.

"I've got reasons of my own," responded Joe.

Bill waited some moments for further explanations, but hearing none he inquired:

"Well, Joe, you have no objection to telling me, have you, why you can't expect proper treatment from Gen. Crook?"

The reply was fully characteristic of Joe. Putting on an innocent and injured look, he responded:

"Fact is jist this, Bill, and I don't mind tellin' uv you, because you are my friend and I know it won't go any further, I'll never scout for any 'tarnal gover'ment officer that won't furnish pie to his men. Now, that's my reason."

Bill was, of course, fairly convulsed with laughter at the joke Joe had thus perpetrated on him, and the only

way to get even he at once availed himself of. So turning about, he raised the lid of a "sacred" chest, and drawing from a very obscure corner thereof a dark-colored bottle, presented it to Joe with the remark:

"Old boy, that's good. Imbibe! I'll have you put on the pay-roll to-morrow as scout, and see that you get a daily ration of 'pie.' "

When Crook's command reached Independence Rock, on the Sweetwater, another incident occurred illustrative of Joe's penchant for perpetrating jokes. At this point the expedition went into camp, and the boys—as the soldiers are invariably called in camp—after hard marching, were hungry and wanted a few extras, something at least to take the part of dessert to their regular rations of hard crackers and bacon. Some new supplies were received at Independence Rock, which included a large variety of canned fruits and meats, the very appearance of which was to the privates like cool, crystal water to the traveler in a desert, famishing from thirst. Several of the boys rushed up to the commissary asking for rations of canned goods, but they could be obtained only upon an order issued by the commissary sergeant, a fact which several were not made acquainted with, and consequently could not understand why they were refused.

Joe procured the necessary order, and going to the commissary, obtained a large quantity of canned corn, tomatoes, sardines, oysters, peaches, etc., which he placed on his arm and then shuffled through the camp to his tent, taking good care to display his "rations" to those who had been refused. Presently one of the soldiers stopped him and said:

"Hold on, Joe, I want you to tell me how you got those canned goods. I've been up there begging for a few cans and they wouldn't give me a single one."

"Oh," replied Joe, "that's ther way they treat some uv the boys that they think will stand it. I tell you thet them thar eanned goods belong to ther soldiers, and ef you'll do as I did they'll give yer all yer want."

"Well, what must I do, Joe?"

"Why, jist go up boldly to thet ther commissary with ther list yer want, an' ef he refuses to giv' 'em to yer, knock him down an' take what yer want. Them commissary fellers thinks they're 'fernal smart: yer've got ter teach 'em thet they ain't, thet's all."

Believing implicitly every word Joe had said, the soldier, who was a large double-jointed descendant of the Grampian stock, immediately started off to get the canned goods peaceably if he could, forcibly if he must. Having made out a list of what he wanted, the private called on the commissary and put in his request.

"Where is your order?" asked the commissary.

"Here's my order, and I want it filled," replied the soldier.

"We don't reecognize that kind of an order here; you must—"

But the sentence was left unfinished, for the great right hand bower of that enraged soldier fell so heavily against the commissary's right eye that he would have been falling yet, perhaps, if some friend had not caught him. The soldier then leaped over the counter and helped himself, and he took care not to be stingy about the quantity either. This soldier who was bound to have his "rights" was duly arrested and brought before Colonel Mills, who gave him a severe sentence, but learning the part that Joe had acted, released him after an imprisonment of one day. The Colonel afterward asked Joe why he had so deeeived the soldier, and was answered:

"Oh, I didn't mean any harm; only I wanted to hev a little fun."

There is one more humorous incident arising from Joe's love of practical joking, that must be included before closing this brief record of his life.

The Crook expedition, with Col. Anson Mills commanding, was passing through Yellowstone Park at a late hour one afternoon, when, reaching a spot within a mile of the intended camp for the night, Joe came across an old grave, before which he stopped and reverently uncovered head, appearing at the same time to be much affected. Of course the boys who saw him in this attitude—and it was nearly the entire command—were anxious to know the cause of his singular action. His reply was as follows :

“This hyar is the grave of poor Amos Billings; I helped to bury him in this spot 'way back in '36. Yer see there wuz a party uv twenty uv us, an' we hed been up to the Black Hills a diggin' gold. We found so much uv the precious stuff that we actually loaded ourselves down with it. Every man hed his mule loaded to the las' poun' it could carry, and besides this we all hed our pockets full. In fact we hed to leave a lot uv 'it behind, becos we couldn't carry another ounce. Well, when we got ter this place we went into camp; an' thet night poor Billings took ther cramps. Lordy! how he did suffer, is awful fer me to think uv now. We did everything in our power to help him, but, poor fellow, he died, and here is whar we buried him. As all uv us already hed all the gold we could carry, we buried Billings' gold with him, includin' what his mule was a carryin', fer none uv us considered that we hed any right to it. Poor Amos Billings! here is one tear more to moisten yer grave.”

Shortly after dark, when the command had gone into camp, the entire force under Col. Mills attacked “Poor Amos Billings' grave,” and no body of men ever worked

harder and with greater expectations than they. When the excavation had reached a depth of about ten feet, with a most astonishing circumference, they found—nothing but some old bones!

Joe had conceived this monstrous lie almost as soon as he discovered the grave; and though he placed the date of burial almost anterior to his own birth, the “golden story” turned the soldiers wild, and as he looked around and saw the deserted camp, he only murmured, “What ’fernal fools these fellers be!”

Notwithstanding the fact that nearly every one who enjoyed his acquaintance was his friend, Joe died the victim of the most damnable assassination. On the 5th day of December, 1876, while sitting in front of his cabin at Red Cloud, Dakotah, performing some little duty, a cowardly fiend slipped up to the corner of the cabin, where, from a concealed position, he shot poor old Joe to death. It was a most terrible murder, which could find a parallel only in the assassination of his friend, Wild Bill, only four months before, and, deplorable to relate, Joe’s murderer made good his escape and has never since been apprehended.



Kit Carson and his Blind Horse.



# LIFE OF KIT CARSON.

---

## CHAPTER I.

No character of which history gives any account presents more anomalous peculiarities than that of Kit Carson. His whole nature was enigmatic, for no two persons, however intimate they might have been with him, whether on the plains or in the councils of white men or Indians, could agree in their estimation of his traits of character. Like the temple of Janus, he always presented two or more unlike sides, each so distinctly prominent that those about him were invariably diverse in their opinions respecting his disposition. He was, apparently, at once the polished gentleman and the rough plainsman; shrinking from and courting danger at the same time; an adviser and the reckless mad-cap of his companions; large in his own estimation, yet modest and most unpretentious among his associates; a lover of peace, though still the organizer of discord. In brief, he was unlike any person save himself alone, and had it been possible his spirit would certainly have abandoned its own castle, so as to present a perfect dissimilarity. These strange peculiarities will be partly seen in the following biographical sketch, which pretends to no other merit than that of a faithful portraiture, after a thorough consideration of all the available facts connected with his remarkable career.

CHRISTOPHER (Kit) CARSON'S birth-place has been variously located, and all authors who have attempted to write the history of his adventures have usually prefaced their labors with an argument attempting to prove their respective claims, some asserting that he was born in Kentucky, others in Illinois, and yet others claiming Missouri as his place of nativity. The opinion of the writer, gained from proofs adduced by Peters and Burdett, both of whom have been Carson's biographers, is, that his native place was Madison County, Kentucky, where he was born on the 24th of December, 1809. In the following year, the family removed to what was then Upper Louisiana, but what is now Missouri, settling in a region of country which, at this time, is defined as Howard County.

Gen. John C. Fremont, during his great exploring expedition through the West in the years 1843-44, employed Kit Carson as his chief guide, and in giving an exhaustive report of his travels and discoveries devoted much space to a description of the renowned hunter and his wonderful adventures. The General, in this report, claims that Carson was a native of Boonslick County, Missouri, but as there is no such county in that State the assertion furnishes the proof of its own error. It is very probable, however, that Gen. Fremont meant Boone County, which adjoins Howard, and as Missouri was not organized into counties until some time after Carson's birth, being ceded to the United States by France in 1804 and admitted as a State in 1821, the causes which led to such an error are manifest. Another important fact in this connection affords a still readier means for determining the cause of the error referred to, and also the reasons which induced a removal of Kit Carson's father to Missouri, may be stated as follows:

Directly after the formation of the territorial government over Missouri, the great Salt Springs of Howard county, bearing the name of "Boonsliek," in honor of Daniel Boone, the famous Kentucky woodsman, became the center of attraction to all emigrants seeking homes west of the Mississippi river. Although this section of the country was occupied by numerous bands of Indians, none of the tribes offered any hostility to the settlement of white men on their lands until the encroachments incited cupidity and numerous crimes. These salt works were operated by Major James Morrison, and with such success that they became the means of a rapid building up of the new territory.

One of the first offices opened by the United States for the sale of lands west of the Mississippi was in the vicinity of Boonsliek in the year 1818, when Illinois had just been admitted to the sisterhood of States. It was immediately thronged with purchasers of lands which, the settlers, however, had already been cultivating. Some of these had located themselves on the public domain as soon as it had been purchased by the United States, and foregoing personal safety and the comforts of refined society, had plunged into the wilderness and carved out homes with their own hands. Among this number was the father of Kit Carson, who became possessed of a fine tract of land on Bonne Femme creek.

In the year 1810, when the infant Kit came to Missouri, the territory contained a population of 20,845 souls, and but a single newspaper, the *Gazette*, which is still running as the *Missouri Republican*, and is to-day the most important and influential paper published west of the Mississippi. The primitive condition of the wilderness in which the brave hunter was to be reared, and the causes which led to his adoption of a hunter's life, des-

tined to be so replete with adventure, can thus be readily conceived. The numerous Indian wars which engaged the settlers during the years of 1811 to 1820 it is hardly appropriate to describe here, especially since the father of Kit Carson rarely participated, or if he did no record is available from which the circumstances may be gathered.

Kit Carson, at the age of fifteen, had already become an expert with the rifle, having manifested a passion for hunting at an uncommonly early age. Day after day he would wander through the forests, wholly unaccompanied, in pursuit of bear, deer and wolves, exhibiting especial delight in meeting with the largest species of the former, hundreds of which became victims to his aim before he was scarcely more than a dozen years old. He exhibited a more ardent desire for adventure as he grew older, and in 1826, hoping to find opportunity for a gratification of his longings, he joined a band of traders in an expedition from St. Louis to Santa Fe, New Mexico. During this trip no special incident occurred beyond the accidental shooting of one of the party, which necessitated the amputation of an arm. In the performance of this surgical operation Carson, because of the assistance he proffered and the nerve he exhibited, was called to act the chief part. The instruments used consisted of a razor, hand-saw and an iron bolt; the latter being heated to high temperature and used to cauterize the bleeding cut. Although little skill was used in the operation, the wounded man recovered and served in subsequent expeditions.

After the arrival of the traders at Santa Fe, Carson abandoned the party and went to Fernandez de Taos, where he became intimate with a mountaineer and remained during the following year, engaged chiefly in breaking wild horses, which, after being caught, were

kept in haciendas until a rider could be secured to domesticate them. Being thrown with Mexicans exclusively, Kit applied himself earnestly to the acquirement of the



Kit Carson Employed as a Horse Tamer.

THE NEW YORK  
LIBRARY

Spanish language, in which, after a year of study, he became sufficiently conversant to fill the position of interpreter to a rich American merchant named Trammell,

with whom he made a trip to El Paso and Chihuahua. Leaving this service a year afterward, Carson became teamster in an expedition fitted out by Robt. M. Knight, for a trip to the copper mines on the Gila river, but returning within a few months he again visited Taos.

Having saved a few dollars from the services in which he had been employed, Kit spent a few months in Taos, and until an opportunity was offered him to join a band of forty trappers under Ewing Young. These trappers were organized into a well armed body in order to repel the attacks of Indians, who bitterly resisted the attempts of white men to trap beavers on the waters of the Gila or its tributaries.

The party proceeded directly to Salt River, one of the affluents to the Rio Gila, upon reaching which they were attacked by a body of Indians, but the engagement was short and decisive. The Indians were routed with severe loss, leaving eleven of their number dead on the ground, their flight being too hasty to permit of carrying the fallen ones with them. This was Carson's first Indian fight, but he displayed the rare presence of mind and cool decision of character which at once furnished the true index to the success of his subsequent adventures.

After trapping with much success on the Salt and San Francisco rivers, the company broke camp and divided, one portion returning to Santa Fe and the other, eighteen in number, including Carson, started for the Sacramento Valley, California. In this dreary journey, rendered more difficult by the dry deserts through which the route lay, the party suffered greatly for want of both food and water. So reduced did they become before reaching their destination that availing themselves of the last resource, they killed several of their horses, drinking the blood and consuming the flesh of the faithful animals.

Reaching the beautiful valley of the Sacramento, after weeks of exhausting effort, they began trapping again for beaver, in which occupation they spent several months most profitably.

Shortly before the close of the trapping season a band of Digger Indians came upon the party during the night and succeeded in driving off nearly all their horses, fleeing with the animals to the mountains. The Mohave Indians at the mission of San Gabriel, with whom the trappers had been maintaining commercial intercourse, kindly loaned the party the necessary number of horses to pursue the dusky thieves. Carson, though scarcely twenty years of age, had nevertheless demonstrated his marvelous abilities as a fighter, and to him was entrusted the leadership of the expedition for the recovery of the stolen horses. Accordingly, selecting eleven of his comrades, and leaving the remainder to protect the camp and peltries, he started after the marauding Indians without having the slightest idea of their number. But discovering the trail soon after, no room for doubt was left that the band comprised not less than one hundred savages. But this fact did not deter him in his previously formed resolution, for he advanced with all possible speed through valleys and over mountains until the fresh trail admonished him to move more cautiously. More than a hundred miles from the trapper's camp the red skins were discovered during a late hour in the afternoon, just as they were going into camp for the night.

Having located the Indians and taken careful note of the surroundings, the time had now come for an exhibition of Carson's abilities. Twelve men set over against a hundred furnished an inequality which could only be compensated by extraordinary cunning and complete surprise. Kit was fully equal to the occasion, and his

comrades having perfect confidence in the dexterity and capacity of their leader were prompt in obedience to his orders.

Carson disposed his men in such a manner that, while they remained concealed from view, they could yet readily distinguish every movement of the Indians; ascertain the location of sentinels and the weak points in the camp. Maintaining this position, the party awaited the approach of midnight before making an attack, the wisdom of which decision was determined in the result. Their purpose was assisted by the pall of darkness which fell on the landscape, rendering objects almost invisible except by a concentration of vision, and a previous knowledge of the position occupied by the object sought. The Indians, not anticipating the presence of foes, were not on their guard, while the little band of determined men led by Carson were directed by the knowledge they had gained before night came on.

When the auspicious hour had arrived Carson led his men in a careful detour, until having approached to the position it was necessary to first reach, he made a dash, followed by the others, directly through the Indian camp, shooting into the tents as they sped by, and whooping with such vigor that the horse thieves evidently believed they had been surprised by an entire tribe of native enemies. The direst confusion followed this sudden attack, and as the greatest advantage was now offered, Carson and his men rushed on to the corral, where they found the Indians' horses tethered. These they speedily released and then stampeded, affording the party means of escape during the confusion, for Carson's good judgment told him that after the first tremor of surprise had run through the camp his enemies would recover their scattered senses and not only give battle but follow hard in pursuit.



Directing his men to secure at least one extra horse, some time was spent chasing the flying ponies over the mountains, but the darkness prevented the party from capturing any of the stampeded animals until the following day, when thirty head were secured, and the trappers then returned to their companions, who had been oppressed with grave fears for their safety, and hailed their return with many manifestations of joy.

Shortly after this event the trappers, still accompanied by Mr. Young as the leader, broke camp, and with an immense quantity of beaver skins returned to Santa Fe over the same route they had passed in going to the Sacramento and Jan Jose valleys. These products of their labors they disposed of, and upon a division of the proceeds, each man in the party was given \$500 as his share. In possession of so much money, Carson was unable to restrain his bent for indulging freely in the dissipations peculiar to Mexican towns, and during this period of hilarious intercourse with the rude natives he became involved in a desperate street brawl, which terminated by his flight after having killed one of his opponents.

Being forced to leave New Mexico, owing to the numerous threats made against his life, Carson proceeded toward Missouri, but meeting a party of trappers under James Fitzpatrick, he joined them in a journey to Utah. For a time the party trapped on the Platte, Sweet Water, Goose and Salmon rivers, but with indifferent success; besides, the Blackfeet Indians gave them constant anxiety, as the tribe was a very numerous and hostile one, whose delight was in massacring the whites.

In the spring of 1830 Kit Carson and four others left Mr. Fitzpatrick's party, and proceeded to New Park, on the headwaters of the Arkansas, where they continued

trapping in the company of Captain John Yount and twenty others, until the return of spring the following year. While wintering in camp a band of sixty Crow Indians robbed the party of several horses, to recapture which Carson was dispatched with fifteen men after the robbers.

Taking up the trail he followed the Indians until he found them entrenched behind a rude fortification of logs with their horses tied within ten feet of their shelter. Carson gave his men no time to reflect on the rashness of his undertaking, but ordering an immediate charge, rushed upon the protected savages, nor did he stop until he had seized the horses and led them triumphantly away. In this attack three of Carson's men were killed, but they were brought away, while five of the Indians were slain, one of whom was scalped by Carson himself.

Shortly after this daring attack, Carson and Captain Yount's men were surprised by a force of two hundred Crow Indians, and the fleetness of their horses alone saved them from a massacre. The attack having been made after due preparation by the Indians, they possessed all the advantages, not only in numbers, but also in effective fighting. No other recourse was therefore left Capt. Yount's party but to retreat and trust to the fleetness of their horses for escape. The flight continued under a rain of arrows and bullets for nearly fifty miles, the Indians being determined to possess themselves of the scalps and property of the little band of whites. Several of the party were killed, but Carson escaped with only a slight wound. Had all the Indians been armed with rifles not one of the men would have escaped, but being able to keep a considerable distance in advance of their pursuers, the range was too great for the effective use of arrows, and the few rifles the Indians possessed did all the execution.

## CHAPTER II.

EARLY in the spring of 1832 Captain Yount's party having met with little success during the past season, Carson decided to begin trapping on his own account. He therefore settled with the Captain, but before starting for the new trapping grounds two others connected with Captain Yount expressed their desire to accompany him, which companionship Carson gladly accepted. The three proceeded up the streams into Colorado—or what is now known as Colorado—where they found the beaver more abundant, and there pursued their labors with considerable profit for nearly a year. Returning to Taos with their furs they sold out to much advantage, and immediately afterward Carson joined Capt. Lee in an expedition up Green river.

Capt. Lee's company consisted of thirty trappers under the direction of an old mountaineer named Robideau. This experienced trapper had engaged the services of a young California Indian as a guide and interpreter, such native assistant being rendered necessary by the hostile character of roving Indians which the trappers were constantly meeting.

In the following October, 1833, while the party was encamped on a tributary of Green river and meeting with much success catching both beaver and otter, the young Indian guide contrived to clandestinely secure six of the best horses belonging to the company, and made his escape. The theft was soon discovered, and Kit Carson, who had now become a renowned "thief-catcher," was deputed to recover the stolen animals.

The thieving red skin having had several hours the start, and Carson being little acquainted with the country,

he procured the services of a Utah Indian to assist him in tracing the fugitive.

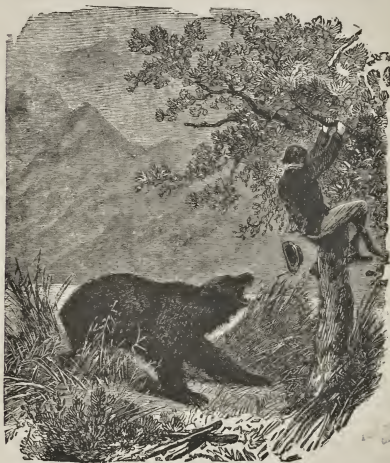
The trail was not definitely determined until the second day after Kit and his companion had started out, but once they became certain of the discovery the speed at which their pursuit was conducted, after one hundred miles had been made, disabled the Utah Indian's horse so that he could proceed no further, and being unwilling to accompany Kit on foot, returned again to the camp of his tribe. Carson, however, not to be deterred in his undertaking, pressed on alone and after a half-day's further ride discovered the thieving Indian riding one of the stolen horses and leading the five others. Almost at the same moment that Carson sighted the Indian the fugitive also saw his pursuer, and a fight to the death each realized was inevitable. The Indian, who carried a rifle and was regarded as an excellent shot, besides being possessed of the courage to make his skill in an encounter most effective, leaped from his horse and sought shelter. Kit fully comprehended the tactics of the Indian, and the distance being great between them he concluded to hazard a shot, knowing that he could reload before the Indian could reach him, especially since he was mounted. Therefore, stopping his horse, Kit drew a bead on the Indian as he was making for a tree, and fired. The aim was so perfect that the thief fell forward dead, with a bullet through his body. This shot was in a measure accidental, for the distance was fully three hundred yards, and the Indian being at the time in a brisk run the aim was rendered more doubtful.

The six horses were recovered and returned to the camp after an absence of six days, and for his services Captain Lee and Robideau presented Carson with a large quantity of peltries, which made the incident one of great profit to him.

In the following year, 1834, Carson, in company with three excellent companions, concluded to spend a season trapping on the Laramie, a stream reputed to be fairly alive with beaver, otter and mink. The expectations of the party were fully realized a few weeks later, when they had pitched their tents on the banks of that clear, but sometimes doubtful river. In fact during all of Carson's experience as a trapper, he never met with success equal to that which he found on the Laramie.

On one occasion, while he was acting as hunter, during this most profitable season, to obtain a fresh supply of meat, he met with an adventure so full of peril that he never afterward entertained the least desire to be similarly situated. Game of every kind was very abundant, and within a mile of the camp he killed a large elk, but as he was proceeding to cut its throat, suddenly there appeared, coming toward him, a species of game for which he had not been hunting. A large grizzly bear, one of the most ferocious and dreadful denizens of North American forests, moved by hunger, resolved, apparently, to make the hunter its victim. Time was just now very precious to Kit, so that he made all possible use of his extremities in reaching the nearest tree, leaving his unloaded gun lying beside the animal he had just killed. The bear, not discovering the dead elk, made directly for Kit, who managed, but just how he was never able to tell, to ascend a goodly sized tree in time to save himself from the voracious maw of the terrible beast. But his perch appeared decidedly unsafe, as the bear would rear up almost to the limb on which he was seated, opening its mighty jaws and blowing hot gusts of air through teeth nearly as long as a man's finger. At every lunge it made Kit felt that the bear would surely reach him, and he would involuntarily hitch up his legs while all the flesh would crawl as

though it were trying to get on top of his head. Grabbing about for something with which to defend himself, he twisted off a branch from the tree, and this he dexterously used in striking the nose of the grizzly whenever it reached up its head uncomfortably close. This so en-



Treed by a Hungry Grizzly.

raged the brute that it fell to gnawing the body of the tree, but being able to make but little impression, abandoned that and began growling with a fierceness which made Kit quake with the most direful anticipations.

The bear kept him a prisoner in the tree until nearly midnight, when it began to circle around the spot, gradually extending the circle until it at length scented the dead elk, upon which it speedily gorged itself, and then disappeared in the woods. Kit got down from his anxious seat speculating on the probabilities of the bear's return, and though every bone in his body seemed to be splitting from the strain to which he had been subjected, he nevertheless made excellent speed toward the camp. His comrades had become very much alarmed at his prolonged absence, and a safe return fully compensated them for their beaver supper, from which unsavory game they had been compelled to satisfy their hunger in the absence of more desirable meat.

After collecting several hundred valuable peltries, Carson and his companions went to Santa Fe, where the product of their season's trapping was disposed of satisfactorily. But Kit did not remain idle more than a few days, for he soon found opportunity of joining another party of fifty men bound for the Blackfeet country, on the Upper Missouri. The trip was a long and tedious one, and in the end proved not only unprofitable but disastrous to several of the men, including Kit himself, for they had struck a country in which none of them had ever been before, and to add to their other hardships they had penetrated a section of country held by a tribe of the most treacherous and cruel Indians on the frontier, which made eternal watchfulness the price of their safety.

Shortly after the encampment of the party on Big Snake river, a band of Blackfeet stampeded the horses of the whites and stole eighteen of their best animals. Carson, to whom the whole company looked for needful assistance, at once proposed pursuit, and taking twenty

of the best men in the expedition, set out after the thieves. A heavy snow covered the ground, which made the trail easy to follow until on the succeeding night, when another fall of snow began to rapidly obliterate the tracks. The pursuit was continued with all possible speed until the trail had become so nearly extinct that Kit and another experienced trapper named Markland had to leave their horses from time to time during the night and search for the tracks by the aid of small torches.



Hunting the Trail.

The party rode for a distance of seventy-five miles, the latter half of the journey being made through extraordinary difficulties, before they came in sight of the Indians. The thieving Blackfeet, numbering about forty warriors, discovered their pursuers, but instead of trying to escape, stopped and desired a parley with the trappers, which, being consented to, some time was spent in speech-making and pipe-smoking. The Indians declared that



they had no intention of wronging the whites, and had taken the horses because they thought the animals belonged to the Snake Indians, their enemies. But with all their protestations of friendship, they still refused to deliver up the stolen animals. An attempt was then made by the trappers to take their property by force, which brought on the fight which Kit had anticipated.

The Indians were armed chiefly with bows and arrows, but a few of them had rifles, which they had obtained at various trading posts. The Indians, therefore, while twice as many in number as the trappers, were not nearly so well armed, and the fighting advantages were about equal. Every man, red and white alike, sought the protection of trees and carried on the battle with all the cunning available. Carson and Markland were bosom companions and fought from adjacent shelters. It chanced that they were directly opposed by two swarthy warriors, each of whom was also armed with a rifle. As Kit sought opportunity to fire at his antagonist he discovered another Indian in the act of taking a deadly aim at Markland, who was unconscious of his own danger. Kit instantly turned his weapon on the Indian and shot him dead, thereby saving his comrade's life; but in this commendable act he came near sacrificing his own life, for the Indian he had been previously watching fired, the bullet striking Kit in the left shoulder, shattering the bone and making a terrible wound. The fight continued with unabated fury until nightfall, when the Indians drew off, taking their stolen property with them.

Carson was found by his companions lying in the snow perfectly conscious, but refusing to make any manifestation of the great suffering he was enduring. He had gathered his coat in a lump at the shoulder, trying to staunch the flow of blood which had saturated the cloth-

ing on his left side. The cold had at last stopped the ebbing life current, but not until he was so weak that it became necessary to carry him back over the long route and through the deep snow to the trappers' camp. Three others of the party were killed and four wounded, but those that were injured were fortunately able to ride. It was a terrible journey to Kit, but he endured his sufferings with such fortitude that those who ministered to his needs could not comprehend how severe was the pain he felt.

Upon their return to camp, Capt. Bridger took thirty men and started out again after the depredating Blackfeet, but though he beat the country for more than a week, he was unable to find the trail, and so returned without accomplishing anything.

Soon after this unfortunate incident in the season on Big Snake river, the party left that immediate section and camped on Green river, where they were joined by a large party of Frenchmen and Canadians who were trapping for the Hudson Bay Fur Company. The camp, by these accessions, numbered about one hundred men, a force sufficient to afford some security against hostile Indians.

Carson was not long in establishing a most favorable reputation among the men, because, while some in the party knew how courageously he had always deported himself in moments of extreme peril, they all soon learned that under all circumstances he remained courteous and obliging, hence he was esteemed by all in the party.

Among the number of imported trappers was a large Frenchman named Shuman; a man particularly fond of bad whisky, and who delighted in bullying his companions. He was rarely engaged in a fight himself, because his arrogant boasts had intimidated nearly all the men, but not content with his own autocratic domineering, he found

pleasure in creating discord and embroiling comrades. On one occasion, while riding about the camp with gun in hand, Shuman, among other indiscriminate insults, began a tirade of abuse directed against the Americans, pronouncing them scullions and chicken-livered scoundrels, who merited nothing but threshings with hickory withes for their cowardice and villainy. This unprovoked language aroused the spirit of Carson, who stepped forward toward the boasting Frenchman and said :

“I am an American, and no coward ; but you are a vapid bully, and to show you how Americans can punish liars, I’ll fight you here in any manner your infamous heart may desire.”

Shuman fairly boiled over with rage at this proposition from a man so far inferior to him in size ; besides he had never before had his privilege of abusing the men questioned. He therefore replied :

“If you want to be killed I have no objections to shooting you as I would a dog. Get on your horse and fight me, starting at one hundred yards and riding toward each other, firing as we come together. Come on, you pale-faced little scullion !”

Kit returned no answer to this arrogant acceptance of his challenge, but mounting his horse he prepared for the duel. The two first rode apart, each divining the purpose of the other, until a proper distance was reached, when they wheeled their horses as if entering a race course under stipulations, and rushed toward each other. The entire camp was, of course, speedily apprised of the duel, and every trapper came out to witness the combat, the sympathies of the men being unanimously with Carson. Shuman was an excellent rifleman and had trained himself to fire from his running horse by shooting buffaloes, and he therefore felt confident of putting a bullet through

the head of his adversary. Kit carried a pistol, but this was from choice, as he was an expert with this weapon. The two determined men rushed toward each other like the knights of mediæval chivalry, until within a few yards, when Shuman raised himself in his stirrups, and, taking aim, fired. The bullet went so close to the mark that a lock of Kit's hair was seen to fall, cut from above his ear. But the aim, though good, had not dispatched a fatal messenger, and Shuman was compelled to take Kit's fire.



Carson's Duel with the Frenchman.

The smoke from the Frenchman's rifle was still rolling away over his head when Carson presented his pistol almost as the heads of the two horses came together, and saluted his enemy. The ball struck Shuman in the hand, and passing upward in the arm, lodged near the elbow. Though not fatal, the wound was sufficient to thoroughly humble the desperado, and so change his disposition as to eliminate all braggadocio from his character.

## CHAPTER III.

Soon after this incident the party of trappers returned to New Mexico, and there Carson joined Capt. McCoy, who was outfitting for another expedition to the Yellowstone, in the Blackfeet country. This party, consisting of a dozen men, upon arriving at the Yellowstone, found no signs of either beaver or otter; so breaking camp, they set out to hunt a stream affording reasonable expectations for success. They continued to travel through a country supporting nothing but artemesia, which barely subsisted their horses, until all their provisions were exhausted and starvation seriously threatened the whole party.

Day after day went by and still neither game nor grass roots could be found until at length they were reduced to such dreadful extremities that to prevent death from starvation they bled their horses and drank the blood. Happily, when it was decided to kill one of the horses for its flesh, a body of Snake Indians appeared, from whom a fat pony was purchased and this the party killed and subsisted upon until they reached Ft. Hall.

After a rest of several days Carson, McCoy and the other members of the party equipped themselves for another trapping expedition, this time intending to plant their traps on Green river, but on arriving at that stream another party of nearly one hundred men was found who, meeting with no success, were preparing to leave for the head waters of the Yellowstone, and if finding no game there had arranged to follow up to the Missouri river sources.

A consolidation was made between the two parties, who now selected Carson and Mr. Fontenelle as their leaders.

This union of forces was made more as a precaution against the Blackfeet Indians, who were very numerous and vindictive in the Yellowstone country.

The winter, which was very severe, was passed among the Crow Indians, who were well provided with large lodges made of buffalo hides ; some of these were twenty feet in diameter with an opening at the top which served as a chimney to permit the smoke from the fire inside to escape. But it was difficult to provide food for the trappers' horses, owing to a deep snow which covered the ground during the entire winter. It was necessary to feed their horses on bark stripped from cottonwood trees, and twigs of willow, a collection of which involved almost constant work.

When spring appeared the trappers started out to begin operations, but their first attempts were discovered by the Blackfeet, who, though greatly reduced in numbers by small-pox which had raged among them during the winter, were still a powerful tribe. Carson, with forty men, was attacked at their traps and it was only by the most desperate fighting that they saved themselves from annihilation. The Indians were kept in check until the trappers' ammunition was almost exhausted, when a retreat was made back toward the camp. During this movement a horse bearing one of the trappers stumbled and fell in such a manner that the rider was caught and held to the earth by the weight of the animal. Five Indians immediately jumped forward to scalp the unlucky rider ; seeing which Carson wheeled back to the aid of his comrade. He shot the foremost Indian and held the others at bay until the trapper was released, and being taken up behind Carson the two escaped.

It was not long before the other trappers, who had gone off in a southeasterly direction to place their traps, hear-

ing the firing, ran to the rescue of Carson's party. With a fresh supply of ammunition and reinforced by sixty men, Carson turned on the Indians and the fight was renewed with great earnestness by both sides. The Indians



Kit Carson Saves his Fallen Comrade.

were at last defeated with a loss of so many of their warriors that they beat a retreat and never afterward molested the victorious trappers.

After prosecuting their operations for two months, a large number of peltries were secured, and the expedition then broke camp and repaired to the trading post on Nend River, where the skins were sold at a large profit.

Carson's next enterprise was in trapping for beaver on the streams flowing from the Rocky Mountains into Great Salt Lake. He took with him only a single companion, believing he could operate more successfully without being restricted by the limitations of a large party, as the Utah Indians regarded him with friendly feelings but opposed the invasion of their territory by any considerable number of white men.

It was while trapping in this section that he met with an adventure of a truly thrilling character. He was walking along the bank of a stream where many of his traps were set, while his companion was back in camp preparing supper. Carson had a large rifle with him, as was his custom, and seeing a turkey strutting along a few yards in advance, was preparing to shoot it when his attention was directed to a pair of fierce eyes gleaming from out the roots of a great tree. It was scarcely twenty feet away, and a moment's inspection convinced him that he was in the presence of a powerful mountain lion. To retreat he knew would have invited the attack he felt was about to be made, so raising his rifle he fired, but there was such a profusion of snake-like roots surrounding the lion's body that his shot resulted only in an exasperating wound, as it struck the animal in the left shoulder. In the next instant the lion was upon him, roaring like its ancestral kith of African jungles. Carson had no other weapon now save the large knife he carried, and with this he defended himself most valiantly. But the sharp poniard-like claws of the ferocious beast penetrated his flesh and cut like a two-edged sword. - Carson's shirt



was ripped off him and while he slashed with his knife and thrust it to the hilt time and again in the lion's body, the infuriated animal still fought with such success that, weakened by the loss of so much blood, Carson was fair-



Carson's Fight with a Mexican Lion.

ly on the point of yielding. But it is hard to give up life, and this universal human feeling impelled Kit to use his last energies in this terrible contest. Fortune at last favored him, for the lion also much exhausted, fell under

one of Carson's blows and as it rolled onto its back with its dreadful fangs still fastened in the remnants of Kit's tattered shirt, a plunge of the knife deep into the animal's throat, severing its head almost from the body, determined the battle in Carson's favor.

But the victory was purchased at great expense, for the wounded trapper was so overcome by the lacerations of his flesh and sinews that he fainted and would undoubtedly have died had not his comrade in camp, alarmed at his long absence, instituted a search which resulted in the



Kit Carson's Indian Wife.

discovery of the bleeding and unconscious body of his companion lying beside the dead lion. Kit was carried back to the camp and given all the care that one true and anxious comrade can give another. This tender and excellent treatment renewed the life so near exhausted, and after a month of dangerous suspension between life and death, Carson began to recover rapidly, and in another month was able to renew his labors. After returning from his trapping expedition in Utah, which, despite his terrible fight with the mountain lion, had proved a profitable one, Carson returned to New Mexico and there made an engagement with Messrs. Bent and St. Vrain to hunt and supply the garrison at Bent's Fort with meat. It was during this occupation that

he married an Indian girl belonging to the Comanche tribe. This union was severed ten months after by the singular devotion of the Indian wife, who, learning of Carson's illness at Ft. Hall, immediately mounted a horse and rode the one hundred miles that separated her from him, in twelve hours. This exertion, which was made within two weeks after she had given birth to a daughter, brought on fever, from which she died in a few days.

Carson sincerely mourned the loss of his young wife, who, though she was an Indian, possessed many noble qualities of heart, not the least being her soul-absorbing love for her husband.

The little girl baby was well cared for by a Mexican family, and lived and grew under their kind treatment. Five years after the death of his wife Kit visited St. Louis, taking his child with him for the purpose of placing her in an educational institution, that she might have the advantages of excellent schooling and training. The little girl developed into a stately and beautiful woman, and when twenty years of age she married a gentleman in St. Louis, named Boggs, who is at this time a resident of Los Animas, Colorado, where Kit Carson, Jr., also has his handsome residence.

When Carson arrived in St. Louis, he was received with public demonstrations of delight, and there were none too great or rich to pay him homage, as he had long been regarded as "The Monarch of the Plains."

At the time of this visit it chanced that Gen. John C. Fremont was in the city, organizing an expedition for exploring that part of the country lying between Missouri and the Rocky Mountains. Although this was his original intention, the General made the overland trip to California, and included in his report all the explorations along the entire route.

Gen. Fremont sent for Carson, as soon as the presence of the great trapper became known to him, and a long interview between them resulted in the employment of Carson as chief guide to the expedition, which left St. Louis by steamer the 22d day of May, 1842. The other members of the exploring party consisted of twenty-one men, principally Creoles, Charles Prenso, first assistant in the topographical survey, and Louis Maxwell, of Kaskaskia, Illinois, who was engaged as hunter.

The expedition disembarked from the steamer at the mouth of Kansas river, and then struck across the broad prairies of Kansas on to the Platte river, for the exploration of which a large rubber boat was carried with them, which was very useful on several occasions. From the South Platte they followed the Oregon trail past Fort Laramie, and from thence on to the Rocky Mountains.

Just before leaving the Platte, the monotony of the journey was relieved by a grand buffalo hunt, which Gen. Fremont describes as follows :

“As we were riding quietly along the bank, a great herd of buffalo, some seven or eight hundred in number, came crowding up from the river, where they had been to drink, and commenced crossing the plain slowly, eating as they went. The wind was favorable ; the coolness of the morning invited to exercise ; the ground was apparently good, and the distance across the prairie (two or three miles) gave us a fine opportunity to charge them before they could get among the river hills. It was too fine a prospect for a chase to be lost ; and halting for a few moments, the hunting horses were brought up and saddled and Kit Carson, Maxwell and I started together. The buffaloes were now somewhat less than half a mile distant, and we rode easily along until within about three hundred yards, when a sudden agitation, a wavery in the

herd, and a galloping to and fro of some which were scattered along the skirts, gave us the intimation that we were discovered. We now started together at a hard gallop, riding steadily abreast of each other, and here the interest of the chase became so engrossingly intense that we were sensible to nothing else. We were closing upon them rapidly, and the front of the mass was already in rapid motion.

“A crowd of bulls, as usual, brought up the rear, and every now and then some of them faced about, and then dashed on after the herd, and then turned and looked again as if more than half inclined to stand and fight. In a few moments, however, during which we had been quickening our pace, the rout was universal, and we were going over the ground like a hurricane. When at about thirty yards, we gave the usual shout (the hunters *pas de charge*), and broke into the herd. We entered on the side, the mass giving way in every direction in their heedless course. Many of the bulls, less active and less fleet than the cows, paying no attention to the ground, and occupied solely with the hunter, were precipitated to the earth with great force, rolling over and over with the violence of the shock, and hardly distinguishable in the dust. We separated on entering the herd, each singling out his own game.

“My horse was a trained hunter, famous in the West under the name of Provean, and with his eyes flashing, and the foam flying from his mouth, sprang on after the cow I was pursuing like a hungry tiger. In a few moments he brought me alongside of her, and rising in the stirrups, I fired at the distance of a yard, the ball entering at the termination of the long hair, and passing near the heart. She fell headlong at the report of the gun, and, checking my horse, I looked around for my companions.

“At a little distance Kit was on the ground engaged in tying his horse to the horns of a cow, which he was preparing to cut up. Among the scattered bands at some distance below I caught a glimpse of Maxwell, and while I was looking a light wreath of white smoke curled away from his gun, from which I was too far to hear the report. Nearer and between me and the hills was the body of the herd, and giving my horse the reins we dashed after them. A thick cloud of dust hung upon their rear which filled my mouth and eyes and nearly smothered me. In the midst of this I could see nothing and the buffaloes were not distinguishable until within thirty feet.

“They crowded together more densely still as I came upon them and rushed along in such a compact body that I could not obtain an entrance—the horse almost leaping upon them. In a few moments the mass divided to the right and left, the horns clattering with a noise above everything else, and my horse darted into the opening.

“Five or six bulls charged on us as we dashed along the line, but were left far behind, and singling out a cow I gave her my fire, but struck too high. She gave a tremendous leap and scoured on swifter than before. I reined up my horse and the band swept on like a torrent and left the place quiet and clear. Our chase had led us into dangerous ground, a prairie-dog village, so thickly settled that there were three or four holes in every twenty yards square, occupying the whole bottom for nearly two miles in length.”

While Gen. Fremont was making his second attack on the herd, Carson left the buffalo which he had killed and partly cut up to pursue a large bull that came rushing by him alone. He chased the game for nearly a quarter of a mile, not being able to gain rapidly owing to the blown condition of his horse. Coming up at length to the side

of the fleeing buffalo Carson fired, but at the same instant his horse stepped into a prairie-dog hole, going down and throwing Kit over his head fully fifteen feet. The bullet struck the buffalo low under the shoulder, which only



Carson and the Wounded Buffalo.

served to so enrage him that the next moment the infuriated animal was pursuing Kit, who, fortunately not much hurt, was able to run toward the river. It was a race for life

now, Carson using his nimble heels to the utmost of their capacity, accelerated very much by the thundering, bel-lowing bull bringing up the rear. For several minutes it was nip and tuck which should reach the Platte river first, but Kit got there by a scratch a little in advance. It was a big stream, and deep water under the bank, but heavens ! it was paradise indeed compared with the hades plunging at his back, so Kit leaped into the water trusting to Providence that the bull would not follow. The trust was well placed for the bull did not continue the pursuit, but stood on the bank and shook his fists—head—vehemently at the struggling hunter, who preferred deep waves to the horns of a dilemma on shore.

Kit swam around for some time, carefully guarded by the bull, until his position was observed by Maxwell, who attacked the belligerent animal successfully with a No. 44 slug, and then Kit crawled out and—skinned the enemy.

---

#### CHAPTER IV.

CARSON continued with Fremont until the expedition returned to Laramie, after Fremont's ascent to the summit of the loftiest peak in the Rocky Mountain range. Upon leaving the expedition Carson returned to New Mexico, where, in 1843, he contracted a second marriage, espousing a Mexican lady, with whom he lived happily for many years, and who gave him two children, a boy and a girl, the former, Kit Carson, Jr., reaching manhood, but the daughter died while young.

Carson engaged his services again to Bent & St. Vrain, for whom he hunted and acted as courier, until, learning



that Fremont had started out on a second expedition of exploration, and was within two days' journey of Ft. Bent, he decided to visit him. When Carson came into General—then Lieutenant—Fremont's presence, the latter, after greeting him with great warmth, said:

“Carson, you are the man, of all others, I am most delighted to see. If I had known your address I should certainly have communicated my desire to have you accompany me on the present expedition; but since I am so fortunate as to meet you at my camp, your services, I trust, will be given me.”

Carson had not thought of accompanying Fremont, but being offered a good salary, he gave his consent. First returning to Ft. Bent for a number of mules, which Fremont required, he came back to the rendezvous, after which, heading the cavalcade, the expedition moved westward for the Sacramento Valley.

On the 21st of August, 1844, the party of hardy adventurers reached Bear river, and descending that stream twenty miles, they came upon the Great Salt Lake, which Fremont, in company with Carson and two other members of the expedition, circumnavigated in their rubber boat. From this point the journey was continued until Nez Perce was reached, which was a trading post established by the Hudson Bay Fur Company in Northern California. This was the western limit of Fremont's journey, as at this point a connection was made with Commander Wilkes, who had completed the survey eastward from San Francisco.

After a rest of several days, Fremont sent Carson to the Dalles, with instructions to prepare a number of pack-saddles, blankets, provisions and other things needful for a long expedition during the winter, having determined to start back upon his return journey at once.

Notwithstanding the fact that it was now almost mid-winter, the bold explorer had decided to pass through a new section of country, thereby adding to his discoveries, upon the return. He therefore chose a route which would take him, first, to Tlamath Lake, and from there by a southeast course to the Great Basin; thence to the Buenaventura river, and from thence to the Rocky Mountains, at the headwaters of the Arkansas, and then strike Bent's Fort, from which place the government trail would be taken for St. Louis.

This projected route for the return journey, or at least a greater portion of it, was practically *terra incognita* to white men, and therefore concealed obstacles which put to the severest test man's powers of endurance.

The entire party consisted of twenty-five persons, comprising six distinct nationalities, several of them being under age, one of whom, a son of Hon. Thos. H. Benton, was only a lad. But provision having been made, the journey was begun about the latter part of December with light hearts and joyous anticipations. Two Indian guides were engaged at Vancouver's to conduct the party through to Tlamath Lake, which proved to be only a shallow basin containing a little water when the snows were melting during spring-time. From this lake they started for Mary's Lake without any guide save the compasses they carried. This journey brought them into a land of desolation, in which several perished from cold and starvation, their pack animals were lost, and progress made only by carving a highway through snow often twenty feet in depth. But as Gen. Fremont has himself graphically described the perils and terrible hardships of this expedition while searching for Mary's Lake and Buenaventura river, it is useless to repeat the incidents of the expedition here.

Fort Sutter was not reached until the 6th of March, at which time the horses belonging to the expedition had been reduced from sixty-seven to thirty-three, from which, and considering the men who died and were lost, the terrible, almost unparalleled sufferings of the men in this unfortunate expedition may be approximated by the reader. Those of the party who reached Sutter were so reduced by privations they had suffered on the dreary route that each man was little more than an animate skeleton of skin and bone, and their horses were so poor and weak that not one could bear the burden of a rider, so that they had to be led.

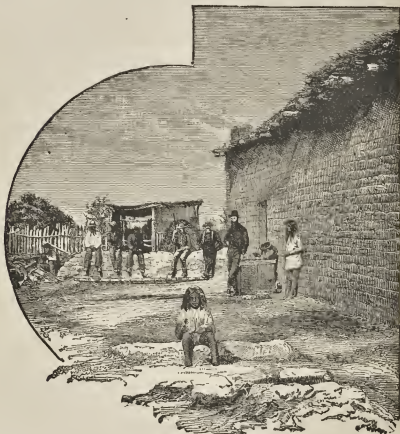
---

## CHAPTER V.

UPON returning from this second expedition, Carson again settled at Taos, and in the spring of 1845 was completing arrangements with a partner named Owens to start a sheep ranche. But before he became fully engaged in raising sheep, Fremont had projected a third expedition, and for the third time called for Carson's services. The two had become warmly attached to each other on their previous trips together, and an admiration for Fremont influenced Carson to again follow his old commander.

The journey of this last expedition lay through the same country over which they had passed previously, but while there was no lack of suffering on this trip the party experienced few trials to be compared with those met with before. After reaching Sutter's Fort the expedition recruited and marched toward Monterey, but were met

en route by Gen. Castro at the head of four hundred Mexicans, who opposed Fremont's further progress and ordered his immediate return. Although Fremont had but forty men, each one had been tried in the crucible of hard experience and knew how to meet any opposition, so by skillful tactics they evaded Castro and moved on to Monte-



Scene in Taos, N. M.

rey, where there were a number of Americans ready to join them, appreciating the probabilities of a war between Mexico and the United States, which was then being prepared for.

Very soon after this the war tocsin was sounded, and

Fremont, with Carson as his first lieutenant, was duly enlisted for the fray, in which they contested with commendable valor and made their power felt throughout California.

In 1847 Carson was sent overland as the bearer of dispatches from Fremont for Washington, but after proceeding eight hundred miles on the journey he met Lieutenant Gillespie, of the United States marines, who had been despatched from Washington for the slope with thirty men. At the Lieutenant's request Carson's dispatches were entrusted to a Mr. Fitzpatrick for transmission and he returned with Gillespie as guide to California. Camping one night on an island in Salt Lake, the little party was surprised and attacked by a party of Tlamath Indians, who brained five of the men with tomahawks as they lay asleep, one of the victims at the time lying beside Carson. After being aroused the remainder of the men attacked the Indians vigorously and repulsed them with a loss of twelve warriors.

When Carson reached California again, Fremont had attracted to his standard a body of two hundred Americans, and at Sonoma had declared the independence of the territory, and adopted the Bear Flag, which was tendered to Commodore Sloat, who raised the united flags over the camp.

Soon after this Fremont was appointed Governor of California, and Carson was again sent to Washington with dispatches apprising the Government of the situation on the slope. He performed this journey in sixty days, and then hastened his return to the field of action.

While a squad of Fremont's men were manœuvring thirty miles from San Diego, they were surrounded by a large party of Mexicans, who cut off their retreat and threatened the little party's annihilation. The Americans

took position in a clump of timber, and there resisted attack until hope seemed exhausted. When night approached, Carson addressed the men, declaring that the only possible means for their escape lay in the possibility of communicating with the forces at San Diego and securing their assistance. But this plan seemed anything but feasible, as the Mexicans had established a complete cordon around the American squad and any attempt to break through the lines would certainly be detected. After counselling with the men for some time on the hopelessness of their situation, Carson volunteered to make the attempt at establishing communication with San Diego, and in this effort Lieutenant Beale offered to accompany him. The two therefore started out at midnight, and crawling on their hands and knees, they approached the first line of guards without detection. Their shoes were then removed to prevent noise, and again they resumed their perilous progress, over rocks and through briars, each step lacerating their feet, and the breaking of each twig exciting the gravest fears of discovery. But the outlying posts were passed, and then they made all possible haste for San Diego, which was reached shortly after daylight. The sufferings of this journey were so acute that Lieutenant Beale was for several days deranged from the effects, and did not recover his usual physical health until two years had elapsed. Carson's feet were so badly torn and bruised that for a time amputation seemed necessary, and he was unable to walk again for nearly two months. But the object of their mission was accomplished, Commodore Stockton sending relief forward, which arrived barely in time to save the Americans from massacre.

After the close of the Mexican war Carson and his old friend Maxwell settled in the beautiful Rayedo valley,

fifty miles from Taos, where they each erected substantial and ornamental residences, at which point there is still a thriving settlement. It was while living here in 1853 that Carson received his appointment as Indian agent for New Mexico, which position he qualified for by filing the necessary bonds and entered upon the discharge of his duties as a true almoner of the Government's bounty to the Indians. His administration was characterized by wisdom and exact justice, for which he received universal credit by his wards and all the citizens of New Mexico.

In 1863 Gen. James H. Carlton directed the formation of a New Mexican Brigade, of which Carson was made Brigadier General, and in this capacity he continued his excellent services until the close of the war.

The life of this noted hunter and plainsman closed on the 23d day of May, 1868, at Ft. Lyon, Colorado, the immediate cause of his death being the rupture of a large artery in the neck. Only a few months previous to the termination of his active career, he had visited Washington on some important business connected with the Indian Department in New Mexico, and at the solicitation of the various trades bodies in cities along his route, he stopped at many of the important towns to receive the homage of an admiring people. Everywhere along the line of his travel flags were flying and salvos of cannon proclaimed with what estimation he was regarded by the American people.

When his will was opened several days after his death, a clause was found in which he bequeathed his trusty old rifle, one he had carried through all the stirring events of his thirty-five years of plains life, to Montezuma Lodge, A. F. and A. M., at Santa Fe.



CAPT. D. L. PAYNE,  
(The Cimarron Scout.)



# LIFE OF CAPT. D. L. PAYNE,

## THE CIMARRON SCOUT.

---

### CHAPTER I.

HON. DAVID L. PAYNE, generally known throughout the West as Capt. Payne, of the Oklahoma Colony Co., was born in Grant county, Indiana, December 30, 1836. Being a lover of hunting and adventurous sports, in the spring of 1858, in company with his brother, he started West with the intention of engaging in the Mormon war which was at that time creating a furore of excitement throughout the country, and especially in the West. Reaching Doniphan county, Kansas, he found the excitement somewhat abating, and inducements offering, he concluded to pre-empt a body of land and erect a saw mill. This investment, while the prospects had appeared decidedly flattering, nevertheless proved a most unfortunate speculation, and Payne soon found himself destitute of means. He had resources, however, which could not be readily expended, and his courageous heart and craving for adventure soon afforded him occupation of a most congenial character.

At the time of Payne's settlement in Doniphan county that now fertile and thickly populated section was the grazing grounds for vast herds of buffalo, deer, wolves and other wild animals peculiar to the plains. These he

hunted with much success and gratification, gradually extending his occupation southwestwardly until he had penetrated the Magillon mountains of New Mexico, explored the course of the Cimarron river of the Indian Territory, and become thoroughly acquainted with the topography of the great Southwest. He naturally drifted from hunting to scouting, and thenceforward he was engaged continually by either the Government or private expeditions, becoming the comrade of all the distinguished guides, trappers and hardy characters of pioneer life. His intimacy with Kit Carson, Wild Bill, Buffalo Bill, California Joe, Gen. Custer, and many others with national reputations, approached comradeship.

When the civil war broke out, Payne was one of the first to volunteer his services, being placed in the Fourth regiment, which was subsequently consolidated with the Third, and shortly afterward the two were joined with the Tenth regiment. He served three years as a private, refusing in the time of his service six different tenders of commissions. At the expiration of his three-year term he returned to Doniphan county, and in the fall of 1864 he was elected to the Kansas Legislature, serving in the session of 1864-65, during which, while never courting the part of an orator, his influence was pronounced. At the close of the Legislature he again volunteered as a substitute for a poor neighbor who had been drafted and whose care for a household full of children was such that leaving them they would have been dependent upon the charity of the neighborhood. Payne, upon his re-enlistment, assisted in recruiting a company for Gen. Hancock's corps of veterans, and succeeded in enlisting one hundred and nine men, all hardy Westerners, who were devotedly attached to him. Again Payne refused to accept a commission, preferring to remain a private comrade with his friends.

The division to which Payne was attached was detailed for duty at Washington City and their service was little more than a strict observance of methodical military punctilios. Every man was provided with white gloves, nobby uniforms resplendent with brilliant buttons, highly polished boots, and their guns were required to shine like the armor of de Abigail, the ladies' knight-errant.

After engaging in this elegant body service for a few months the division was ordered to Trenton, N. J., where during a few days stay the following humorous incident took place: Being called out for inspection one morning, every man radiant with his bright regimentals, a Dutch captain named Schmit was found to be inspecting officer, contrary to expectations. This fellow, clothed with a brief authority and fierce moustache, but without the external dress of a fancy officer, marched up in front of Payne's company with his breast thrown out like a Dutch tobacco sign, and exclaimed, "One, two, tree!—front! right dress!" executing the movements with a precision as if each was regulated by a vast system of clock-work inside the ample profundity of his naturally large abdomen. Extending his ungloved hands, the officer received Payne's highly polished gun and began the inspection, when he was astonished to hear himself addressed in the following undignified manner. Said Payne:

"I'd rather you wouldn't handle that gun without gloves."

Turning as though he had been stuck sharply with a pin the Dutchman hissed between his teeth:

"Vat you say, you veller mit so much lip?"

"I mean that I would prefer that you would not run your big sweaty hands over that gun," replied Payne.

"Veller!" said the now doubly inflated Teutonic representative of the Faderland generalissimo, "do you know

dot you vas speaking mit an officer, und dot I vill teach you how it vas you dalk like you don't know some-dings."

"I know," pleasantly answered Payne, "that you are nothing but a d—d Dutchman, and that I have long since learned how to talk to such roaring nobodies."

With a spring like that of an infuriated bovine, the Dutchman leaped toward Payne, at the same time throwing the gun with such force that it nearly knocked the owner down. This so enraged Payne that he stepped out of the ranks and with the force of a catapult let fly his right fist which caught the officer under the chin, knocking him into the air like a trounced frog. The Dutchman lit yelling like his Hessian forefathers on the banks of the Delaware a century before.

"For Got's sake, doan you kill your superior officer! I'll haf you in der gaurd house; I make you built a whole fort, so help me by gracious! Sergeant, arrest dot man, I command you mit my power!"

Thus the sorely distressed inspecting officer cried, all the time inspecting himself rather than proceeding with that of the company.

The sergeant did undertake to arrest Payne, but when the attempt was made the non-commissioned officer used his best endeavors to arrest himself in a backward flight not wholly unlike that which the Dutchman had just taken. Finding his hand now well in, while the officer continued a tirade of abuse, Payne made a second attack, and catching the already dilapidated Dutchman by the collar and a convenient place about his posterior middle, drove him against the side of a house with such force that the beer, sausage and kraut of at least twelve months were thoroughly well shaken up.

Instead of attempting to rescue the unfortunate officer,

the boys in the company applauded the manual exercise with vociferous shouts of, "Give it to him!" "Knock the bung out of his beer reservoir!" "Show up the kraut!" "Set down on him!" and other tender expressions appropriate to the occasion.

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, the abject and most pitiable appearing inspecting officer was helped to his feet, and by painful persistency reached headquarters. On the same day Payne was arrested and placed in the guard-house, but he managed first to telegraph his predicament to Gen. Tom Ewing at Washington, who was a most intimate friend, and on the following day, before any trial was had, Ewing had influenced Secretary Stanton to send a pardon, and thus Payne escaped any punishment for humorously, but none the less effectually, drubbing his superior.

About two weeks after the incident just related, Payne's company was ordered back to Washington, and after the lapse of another week he was ordered to report, with a letter to Gen. Wenzle, at New York harbor. Not understanding nor inquiring what the errand meant, he obeyed his instructions and was much astonished, after seeing the General read the letter, to hear himself addressed as Lieutenant Payne, for he could not divine why the title had been bestowed.

Said he: "I guess you are mistaken, General. I am not a lieutenant."

"Well, then," replied Wenzle, "this is strange; but maybe you have been sent to me to go on my yacht. Are you a seaman?"

Payne, though he well knew his disqualifications for a seaman, nevertheless, feeling in the humor for fun and adventure, he promptly responded "yes," and being requested, he went down and reported to the captain of the

yacht. Now, thinking the joke, or misapprehension, had proceeded far enough, he plainly told the Captain that he knew no more about water service than a Government contractor did of the Golden Rule. Payne's astonishment was very much increased upon hearing the officer say that he wanted one man at least who was ignorant of marine service, and that he would be accepted to fill that vacancy.

Two days afterward, Payne and a comrade were ordered to man one of the yacht's small boats, for the purpose of taking two of the naval officers, with four elegant ladies, out on a pleasure ride in the harbor. Payne knew nothing about rowing a boat, but for a time he tried hard, though his efforts only subjected him to the derision of the ladies and officers. At length, tired of his vain endeavors, and being much piqued, he threw his oar out into the water, and then jumped in as if to catch it, but really, owing to the heat of the day, he only wanted a bath. After swimming around aimlessly he returned to the boat, and nearly upset it trying to get in again. All this occasioned much laughter, while Payne so infused his comrade with a spirit of mischievousness that he too threw away his oar.

After the fun had proceeded some time, the officers ordered Payne and his companion in servitude to recover the oars and row the boat back to shore; but this the two oarsmen peremptorily refused to do, and upon being threatened, Payne told the officers that if they made any attempt at coercion he would throw them both out of the boat just as he had the oars. Now, here was a great big dilemma for the officers, their embarrassment being specially humiliating because of the presence of four beautiful ladies, before whom anything but a maintainance of official dignity and gallantry would be shocking.

Finding that orders and threats accomplished nothing, and the prospects appearing that the party would spend the night at sea, the ladies began a series of importunings with Payne; but he was inflexible, while his sinewy arms, powerful build, large proportions and determined features admonished the officers how disastrous coercive measures would certainly prove. Every other means of gaining the shore having been fruitlessly debated, the officers at length were compelled to splash around until they recovered the oars, and then pull the boat and party to shore, while Payne and his comrade sat, one in the prow and the other in the stern, singing jolly songs for the delectation of the ladies. When they reached shore Payne anticipated results by calling at once on his friend, Gen. Tom Ewing, whose influence again procured for him a pardon; but he never returned to the marine service, for directly afterward he was discharged with his company, and returned home.

Payne's service in the volunteer army extended over a period of eight years, first as a private in company F, Tenth Reg. Kans. Infantry, from August, 1861, until August, 1864; his second enlistment was in company G, Eighth Reg. of Veteran Volunteers as private from March, 1865, until March, 1866; his third service was as captain of company "D" of the Eighteenth Kans. Cavalry, from July, 1867, until November of the same year; and his last service was as captain of company H, Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry, in which he served from October, 1868, until October, 1869. In the meantime he performed other duties of great service to the State, holding the position of postmaster at Ft. Leavenworth, a member of the Legislature, and was, during two terms, sergeant-at-arms of the Kansas Senate, besides engaging in such political campaigns as gave him an acknowledged influence. He was an ar-

dent supporter of Gen. Tom Ewing, who after serving a term as Chief Justice of Kansas, sought the greater honor of U. S. Senator. Payne worked so hard to secure Ewing's election that the latter, though a politician, never forgot those favors, and remains to this day one of Payne's warmest friends.

During the rebellion Payne was attached to the army of the frontier under Gens. Price and Blunt, and was engaged in nearly all the memorable conflicts that took place in Missouri and Arkansas, distinguished for desperate fighting and dreadful mortality. He was a participant in the battle of Prairie Grove, Arkansas, which occurred on the 7th of December, 1864, and in this engagement he performed an act of gallantry which well entitles him to a place in the honorary niche of history. In the hottest of the fight his 1st Lieutenant, Cyrus Leland, who was at the head of his men leading them in an onslaught against the enemy, was struck hard in the right shoulder and his sword knocked several feet distant. Leland tried in vain to recover his sword with the right hand, but instead of obeying his will the arm was limp and useless. Then, like the courageous man he was, the wounded lieutenant raised the lifeless arm with his left hand and thrust it between his suspender and body, and picking up the sword in his left hand he continued bravely leading his men. In a few moments after receiving the wound, a bullet having crashed through his shoulder, the gallant lieutenant fell from sheer exhaustion, though at this time the enemy had recovered from the charge, and reinforced was pouring such a deadly fire into the faces of Payne's company that the commanding officer ordered his men to fall back. Payne, seeing his brave comrade lying on the ground, while a maddened enemy was charging back ready to trample him, stepped out of ranks and lifting



the almost lifeless Lieutenant, bore him on his shoulders, like Hector of Troy, for fully half a mile, and deposited his precious burden within his own tent, where immediate surgical attention saved brave Leland's life. Such an act of devoted comradeship can only find a parallel in the Brothers-in-Arms of the time of Henry II., and deserves the richest garlands of poetry to enshrine it in history. Leland was afterward appointed Adjutant General on Ewing's staff, and is now a wealthy citizen of Troy, Kansas, a living evidence of Payne's heroism and devotion.

During his term of service in the Legislature in 1864-65, Capt. Payne opposed the special bounty act, upon purely patriotic grounds, and after its passage he again volunteered, but instead of accepting the bounty he permitted it to be credited to his county—Doniphan—thus manifesting his consistency and honesty.

---

## CHAPTER II.

AFTER the close of the war, Payne again resumed the occupation of a plainsman—scouting, hunting, trailing, guiding trains, etc. His disposition was so congenial, and possessing a courage which challenged the respect of the greatest desperado, he has ever enjoyed the popularity of every pioneer who knows him. The Indian Territory and cañons of the Cimarron, including the great salt basin, are so familiar to him that he is entitled, by precedence, to the appellation of "The Cimarron Scout." Few men are better acquainted with the Indian character, and his conflicts with the Cheyennes, Arrapahoes, Kiowas and Navajoes are numerous almost beyond the limit of

description, one of which, because it is classed among the most remarkable that ever took place on the plains, will serve to illustrate his true character.

In the spring of 1868, the Northern Cheyennes, under Tall Bull, made a raid along the Republican river, and near Jules City they committed a massacre of white settlers and travelers which will long live in the memory of Western pioneers. Their atrocities were peculiarly shocking because they spared none but two women whom they reserved for their own devilish purposes; ripping up the other females, dashing out the brains of children and horribly mutilating the men. The two women whose lives were spared were Mrs. Morgan, a bride of only one month, and a Miss White, both of whom were en route, with their families, for Southern Colorado. A Mrs. Blinn, from St. Louis, was captured, together with her little boy, at the same time, and spared for a while, but being unable to endure the march, the Indians split her head open and butchered her six-year old boy, leaving their bodies lying in the trail, where the skeletons were afterward found.

As soon as a report of the dreadful outrage spread through the settlements, an armed band started in pursuit of the Indians and followed them for several months, only to at last lose the trail and return home without accomplishing anything.

When the settlers were first attacked, Mrs. Morgan's husband was shot down before her face, and of course she believed him dead. Miss White, as she was being carried off by her captors, still entertained some hope that her father had escaped, and would act as a guide for some relief party that she expected would make an effort to rescue her. She therefore tore her dress in pieces, and from time to time dropped small bits on the way, so

THE MURDER OF MRS. BLINN.

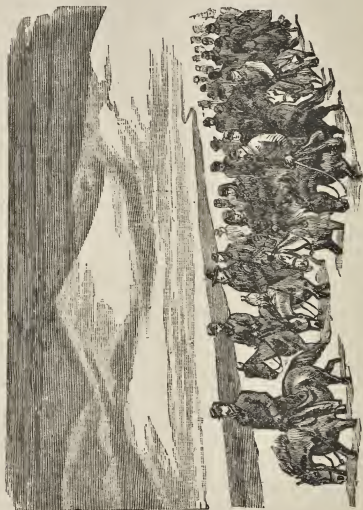




that if her father should be among the pursuers he would recognize the pieces as parts of her dress, and the party would thus be enabled to keep directly in the trail. Miss White's father, however, was killed, while the husband of Mrs. Morgan, though desperately wounded, was found by friends and by careful nursing became convalescent, but not until after some months had elapsed. When Mr. Morgan grew able to ride, he went directly to Gov. Crawford, of Kansas, and asked for assistance in an effort he proposed to make for the recapture of his wife. There were many who believed that Mrs. Morgan and Miss White had been murdered, and that such an expedition as the anxious husband proposed was altogether useless. However, a short time after his conference with the Governor, he received reliable information that both the women were still living and in the keeping of their first captors. Gen. Custer was commanding a body of Government troops in southern Kansas at this time, and learning of the expedition proposed by Morgan, he became anxious to enter a chase after the Cheyennes. But before any definite action was taken, Gov. Crawford sent for Capt. Payne, for the purpose of consulting him as to the advisability of entrusting the expedition to Government troops or to a volunteer force of Kansas men. Capt. Payne at once advised a concerted movement with an organization of two or three companies of volunteers who would place themselves under the general command of Custer. This action was deemed most expedient, because the Northern Cheyennes had joined their Southern brethren in the Indian Nation, and by a union of the two tribes had a force of fully one thousand warriors.

The result of the interview was that the Governor gave Capt. Payne orders to enlist from one to two hundred men and report to Custer at Ft. Hays. Payne returned

directly to Leavenworth, and in two days' time had raised a volunteer force of one hundred and fifty men, and had collected one hundred and seventy-five head of mules for the expedition. This force, of which Payne was chosen



Marching Through the Snow.

Captain, he took at once to Ft. Hays, and on the next day after his arrival there, November 20th, the entire command was mounted and the expedition started for the

Cimarron, along the banks of which stream it was reported the Indians had recently been seen.

The rigors of a bitter winter came on very early that year, and the expedition had moved only a very short distance, when, striking the lower ridge of the Wichita range and Cimarron cañons, the snow accumulated so rapidly that it offered the most serious impediments, a large number of their horses and mules being lost. The command, numbering about twelve hundred men, continued manœuvering in the Indian Territory until the February following, when, owing to the extreme weather and inability to locate the Indians, the expedition went into camp at Ft. Sill and remained for one week. At the expiration of this time the scouts brought in word that the Cheyennes, two hundred strong, had been sighted only a few miles west. This information created great excitement in the camp, and preparations were made for an immediate move. Accordingly, on the 12th of February, the march was begun, the force having been increased by the employment of one hundred scouts, who went ahead "beating" the route in order to definitely locate the Indians. Gov. Crawford had also joined the expedition, first resigning his position as Governor of Kansas in order to participate in the campaign.

The Cheyennes' trail was soon found and led southwestwardly for fifty miles; then struck directly across the Great Salt Plains toward New Mexico. This desert spot, which is from sixty to one hundred miles broad, is one of the most wretchedly dreary and desolate stretches of country on the globe. It is covered by a thick, stubby growth of wire grass, which, in turn, is covered by a heavy incrustation of salt. In marching through it the greatest difficulty is experienced, for the feet sink down just as in a twelve-inch depth of snow covered with a

strong crust of ice. In addition to this impediment, which cuts the feet of horses and men in the most cruel manner, the salty atmosphere, through inhalation, produces a constant burning thirst, while nowhere can be found in that vast expanse a drop of water.

On reaching this desolate region, the expedition, being wholly unacquainted with the length and character of the march, neglected to carry a proper supply of water and provisions, a fact which every one in the command realized after the first day of their entrance thereon. The animals that were still alive were barely sufficient to convey arms, munitions and camp equipment, so that the men were compelled to complete the entire journey on foot. When night approached, the officers and scouts looking about for water or the shelter of some kind oasis, saw only the shimmering salt, stretching away, apparently, to the rim of the horizon on every side; nothing but the trail of the Cheyennes bore any evidence that a single living thing had ever before explored the regions of this wilderness of uninhabitable desolation. The pangs of thirst began to be felt in both men and horses, which increased as the weary hours wasted, and to prevent death from this most terrible deprivation, many experiments were resorted to. Deep wells were sunk, but the water thus obtained was so strongly impregnated with the saline properties of the earth above that it was next to impossible to swallow it.

The scarcity of provisions became another source of extreme privation, so that the command was placed on half rations, while the march was so fatiguing that it appeared for a time that the entire expedition would certainly perish within the confines of this dreadful, barren solitude. These several exhausting and harassing impediments so retarded the journey that it was not until the



close of the fourth day that the advance scouts reported the appearance of trees which margined the Salt Plains. When this truly glorious sight broke upon the vision of the suffering army, every throat, though dried by thirst like crispy parchment, found voice for praise, for it was verily like the harvest of life out of death.

Several of the horses died before they reached the haven of growing vegetation and the purling of singing brooks. So sorely famished were the men that they broke their fast upon the dead carcasses. After reaching the Cimarron river, although there was an abundance of pure water and grasses for their jaded and starved animals, yet contrary to general expectation, no buffalo or other game was found, and the men were therefore at last reduced to the extremity of killing some of the remaining horses for meat in order to save themselves from death by starvation. Capt. Payne, who suffered all the privations endured by his men, was forced by the pangs of hunger to appease his appetite on the steaks of some of his faithful pack animals, and now makes the observation that mule meat may not appear very palatable when included among the ample spread of a versatile menu, but on the occasion when he partook of it he felt that it was as delicious as the manna that heaven distilled to save the chosen of Israel.

After three days more of marching, bearing up under all their sufferings, the expedition reached a section of country where prairie chickens and wild turkeys were abundant, and a general hunt soon provisioned the army for the time being.

On the 13th of March the Cheyennes were discovered encamped on a small tributary of Red river, and immediately upon this fact being known preparations were made for an attack. When the Indians learned the prox-

imity of their pursuers, and finding how determined was the expedition, ten of the sub-chiefs were sent to Custer as a peace commission for a "pow-wow." Among this decemvirate of chiefs were Roman Nose, the head chief, Lone Wolf, Cross Timber, Eagle Chief and Yellow Nose, five whose names were specially loathesome to the Western settlers. When this body of treaty peace-makers came into camp Custer immediately ordered their seizure, and then sent back word to the waiting tribe that he would hold the ten chiefs as hostages, and would kill each of them if the women were not delivered up. In answer to this the Indians agreed to return the women, but declared they were not with the tribe but were in charge of the squaws at Little Robe camp, twelve miles below. They further asked permission to drop down to that camp, promising that they would return on the next day with the women. This request Custer granted, feeling confident that so long as he had possession of the ten chiefs the tribe would not kill the women, nor would they attempt an escape. This action of Custer was so bitterly opposed by all his men that only the most careful generalship prevented a mutiny.

The Indians packed up their things, and loading their baggage, squaws and children onto sleds they departed southward. Custer, however, became somewhat anxious about the fulfillment of their promise, and to provide against possible ill-results, he followed with his entire force. When the command reached Little Robe imagine Custer's surprise to find neither Indians nor any evidence of a recent occupation of the place. The cunning Cheyennes had taken advantage of the privilege and dispersed themselves like a brood of young quails when alarmed, not one being in sight.

This result so annoyed the men that they all clamored

for the execution of the captive chiefs, but Custer and Payne had influence enough to prevent this. On the following day the scouts reported the appearance of Indians

Departure of the Cheyennes.



lurking around the camp, and it now became evident that they were trying to discover what had become of their

chiefs. This fact led to a most sensible suggestion which resulted, happily, in the recovery of the two women. Knowing that the Indians were now fully cognizant of what was taking place in the white camp, Custer ordered preparations to be made for the execution of the ten chiefs. Ten ropes were thereupon adjusted to a long branching limb of a large tree and the ten nooses displayed to great advantage; a platform was erected underneath the ropes, everything being suggestive of an execution, and then a cordon of soldiers was stationed around the tree. Seeing these preparations, some of the Indians came in from their hiding places and offered to give up the women if the lives of the chiefs were spared. This Custer consented to do, provided the women were delivered to him within two and one-half hours from that time.

The strategics of the Cheyennes could not avail them now, and soon there was descried coming down a defile of the mountains, a long line of Indians, having in front of them Mrs. Morgan and Miss White, each having a buffalo robe wrapped about her person. When they had reached within several hundred yards of Custer's camp four of the Indians accompanied the ladies into the presence of Custer and formally delivered them up.

The women presented a most forlorn appearance when they reached their rescuers, and told a tale of suffering, which, if it were not well verified, would certainly be discredited by many. Mrs. Blinn, being unable to continue the march, owing to her inhuman treatment, refused to go further, and not being able to force her, an Indian, obeying the order of his chief, grabbed her by the long hair which so beautifully adorned her head, and while another of the fiends was butchering her little boy, she was dragged a short distance, her skull split open by a tomahawk and her body horribly mutilated.

The other two ladies were given over to the care of the squaws, whose jealousy prompted cruelties as cunning as the inquisitorial torments. They were forced to perform the most trying and degrading labors of the camp, and during the winter time, when carrying wood and water, their fingers would become so cold that they could not resist the temptation to warm them by the fire; as a punishment for this act the squaws forcibly held the hands of the ladies in the blaze until their finger ends were burned to the bone and became charred stumps; yet even in this agonizing condition their labors were not abated, for the heavy cudgel compelled them to continue in the performance of duties almost too heavy for human endurance. Nor did the night bring them rest, for their sufferings continued until sheer unconsciousness afforded a respite. It is almost impossible to conceive how nature, and, least of all, feminine nature, could survive so long under such exhausting and acute pangs of mental and physical torture.

The Cheyennes, who had escaped the annihilation they so justly merited, made off in a direction which caused grave suspicion that their purpose was to unite with other tribes in the territory and thus re-enforced fall upon the expedition before it could reach the sheltering forts of Kansas. This suspicion was so natural that nearly every one in the command confidently expected an attack, which, if it had been attempted by the large number of Indians whom Tall Bull might easily have influenced, would no doubt have proved successful. Thoroughly comprehending the probable danger of his position, Gen. Custer held a consultation with Capt. Payne, in whose judgment the entire command placed the greatest reliance.

Said Custer, addressing Payne: "Captain, we have got to send word to Ft. Hays at once; some one must act as

courier to notify our friends of our position, and to carry the good news that the two ladies are in safety with us."

Capt Payne responded: "Yes, that is my idea, and the sooner a messenger is despatched the better."

"Well, then," replied Custer, "you are the very man to make this trip; you are thoroughly acquainted with the country, and I feel safe in entrusting you with this important mission."

"All right," was the cheerful reply of Payne, notwithstanding the fact that he was the heaviest man in the entire expedition, besides holding an official position in the command.

"You can take your pick of men and horses and start at once. I think you will require about fifty men, but with these I have no fear of your getting through," advised Custer.

"The fewer men I have with me the better," replied Payne, "for fifty of the best soldiers in the expedition couldn't make any headway at fighting the hordes of Indians on the war path between here and Hays, and would only make the trip more difficult."

"Well," responded Custer, "you shall have your own way; what men will you take?"

"I'll take Jack Cowan and Charley Picard," responded Payne, "and my purpose is to set out from here in about fifteen minutes."

This was getting ready with despatch, but that was exactly what the circumstances demanded, and at the expiration of the time decided on, Capt. Payne and his two trusty companions started off briskly for Ft. Hays. The expedition, having been in pursuit of the Cheyennes from November, 1868, until March of 1869, had crossed and recrossed the trail, and so circuitous had been the last month's march that from the point where the ladies

were recaptured to Camp Supply was only one hundred and thirty miles by the direct road, which ran around the northern boundary of the Salt Plains. This first ride was accomplished by Payne in eighteen hours, and reaching Camp Supply, a change of horses—or, rather, of mules—was made, and with a stop only of a few moments, the three couriers started for Ft. Dodge, the next intermediate station. In making the change, Capt. Payne was somewhat annoyed to find that his new mule was a three-year old, upon whose back there had never been the presence of a seat or saddle. Here was fun for those who witnessed the antics of the untamed animal. Payne, though a man weighing nearly two hundred and fifty pounds, was unusually agile for one of his size, and credited himself with an ability to ride anything that could be saddled; but the obstreperous mule could not be saddled until he was violently thrown to the ground and held there till the caparisons were adjusted. By backing the animal up against a rick of wood, so that he could not shy aside, Payne at length managed to mount; it was now that the interesting part of the performance began—it was the trick mule out of the circus ring. At first this long-eared descendant of the Holy Land reared up on his fore-feet and threw his heels out with the force of a cannon ball, taking an angle of nearly forty-five degrees, as if to salute the man-in-the-moon with a ball of Indian Territory mud. In vain did this athletic compound of villainy and masked stupidity try to dislodge his rider by kicking; but having inherited some of the choice rascality, the cunning strategy of his ancestral kith, the mule plunged directly from kicking into bucking, and so quickly, too, was this great protean act accomplished that, it must be confessed, Capt. Payne's last meal became dreadfully agitated over the result.

Imagine the spectacle of a little mule with a back as flexible as an Indian's bow, and having its possibilities as thoroughly in hand. This very considerate animal would draw his back down until it resembled the trough of the the sea; then letting go the spring suddenly, it would shoot up in the shape of a rainbow, permitting the rider to explore the upper currents of atmosphere, and then replace himself with a force as undignified as it was painful. The fun of this thing, it may here be properly stated, was altogether with the mule and the spectators, for the Captain was not allowed a sufficient vacation to discover the nub of the joke.

This free-for-all, go-as-you-please performance continued for some time without any intermission for refreshments, but becoming tired at last with his exertions to please the audience, this interesting mule deliberately lay down, in excellent imitation of the death scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, both of whom, it is well known, gave up the ghost kicking—against the cruel injunctions of Montague, or Capulet, as you please. The persuasive prod, however, brought the mule to life again for the second act, which, it is but justice to his memory to state, he went through with to the eminent satisfaction of his manager.

Away went the three daring couriers, each riding a mule and driving a pack animal before them who was laden with eighteen hundred rounds of ammunition, as a provisionary precaution in case of a siege. Shortly after dark, as the party was clambering up the hills of Western Kansas, they suddenly found themselves almost within the camp of more than a hundred scalp-loving Kiowas. Jack Cowan, in whom there was the moving spirit of the devil to dare danger, proposed riding through the camp on a run "just to see some fun," as he expressed it. Payne admonished Jack that the nature of their mission



was altogether too important for indulging in fun of that character. The three carefully backed out and went around the camp without being discovered, but on the following day, having passed Ft. Dodge and made another change of animals, in looking through the field-glass Payne saw a body of Indians numbering nearly one hundred and fifty, passing through a defile of the hills, evidently following the trail his little party had made. They had not long to await developments, for the paint, discovered through the glass on the faces of the Indians, plainly told the purpose on which they were bent.

Payne and his comrades made off rapidly for a ravine in which they found the bank sufficiently high and abrupt to well serve their needs for a fortification. As the Indians came riding rapidly along the hillside near the ravine, Jack Cowan, being unable to restrain his impulsive nature, drew his carbine and sent a bullet after the leader, but instead of hitting the Indian he struck the red-skin's horse in the head, knocking him down, and the hillside being steep the pony tumbled and rolled down so near Payne and his comrades that their mules became very much frightened and tried hard to get away. The party being now discovered, a fight ensued in which three sturdy scouts were matched against fifty times their number. Payne and Picard fired a moment after Cowan's first shot and two Indians went down, one killed dead and the other badly wounded. The Kiowas were armed with bows and arrows, and as the wind was blowing in hard gusts, they could not discharge their missiles with any accuracy at long range, and they were too cowardly to make a charge.

The fight continued for nearly two hours, with the Indians occasionally riding at great speed in a circle by their dead comrades, five of whom were now on the

ground, and as they came rushing by each one would throw himself on the off side of his horse, and reaching down, try to drag away one of the bodies. This peculiar occupation afforded Payne and his men no small amusement, for the Indians made no serious effort to charge or dislodge the little party. Having at last secured and taken away their dead, the Indians divided, a body of about fifty crossing the ravine, which was quite broad, to make an attack from the other side. Payne at once changed his quarters so as to cover the exposed position, and so dexterously did he handle the Indians now on his side that three of the enemy and two ponies fell victims to his excellent aim, while Cowan and Picard were equally active, and did such execution that the Kiowas drew off a while to council. In about half an hour they came back on a dead run, each of the two parties circling by the ravine and turning loose a shower of arrows, only one of which, however, did any execution; this one struck Capt. Payne in the right shoulder, glancing, cutting a gash of considerable depth, but fortunately did not touch the bone. Two more Indians and one pony went down in the charge, and Cowan, moved by that impetuous spirit which always distinguished him, jumped up on the bank of the ravine, and shouting to the Kiowas, took a long pull at his whisky bottle. Seeing this act of bravado, several of the Indians cried out, "*California Joe!*" and so holy a horror had they of this great fighter, whom they believed Cowan to be, that they immediately made off and were seen no more.

Payne and his party met with no further adventure until the following day, when, on the Santa Fe trail, they were again struck by a party of Cheyennes who had already discovered and set upon Bob Wright, who was taking a freight train to Santa Fe. The three fought the

Indians so well that a respectable distance was maintained. The pack mule, however, came near costing them very dearly; this animal was one of those plodding creatures that, with all the belaboring Baalam could have



A Cheyenne Warrior.

inflicted, would not move out of a jog-trot. It was therefore a fight under the disadvantages of a distressingly slow retreat, with nothing on the broad prairie to afford

shelter. Payne and his men, however, managed to reach Wright's corral without injury, only to find their friends badly frightened over the prospects. There were twelve men with Wright, whom Payne, after filling up to the exciting point with whisky, ordered out and made a dashing charge at the Indians, killing nearly a score and gaining such a decisive victory that the remainder of the band beat a final retreat.

On the fourth day out Payne reached Ft. Hays, having performed the journey of three hundred and sixty-five miles in one hundred hours, one of the swiftest rides, considering the obstacles and delays encountered, ever made on the plains. Before reaching their destination, having lost so much rest, Payne had to rub tobacco in his eyes to keep from falling asleep on the way.

Delivering his message, Payne returned at the head of two hundred men as a relief party, but found Custer and the expedition making rapid progress and all in the happiest humor. No troublesome Indians had been met, and on the 22d of March the command reached Ft. Hays with the two ladies. Mr. Morgan had been unable to accompany the expedition, owing to his enfeebled condition, and remaining at Hays had the incomparable joy of receiving his wife from the hands of her deliverers.

Miss White, who was alone in the world, her father and relatives having been killed at the massacre on Republican river, knew not what to do or where to go. Finding her in a very disconsolate frame of mind, "Pottawattomie" Jenkins, an old pioneer who accompanied the expedition from Pottawattomie county, made a little speech to the boys at Ft. Hays, reciting their gallant acts, and concluding his remarks by calling attention to the lonely condition of Miss White, who was a pretty and highly educated lady, offered a quarter-section of fine land to any

one in the expedition who would marry her. This proposition was accepted by a man from near Leavenworth, whose name cannot now be recalled. The marriage ceremony was performed on the same day, both parties appearing very happy over the singular circumstances which ended in their "consolidation," and at night the event was celebrated by a big "frolic." On the day following a subscription was started for the benefit of the two ladies, both strangely united to husbands, and the sum of \$2,000 was raised, \$1,000 each, which gave the couples a big lift over the obstacles which poverty had interposed.

The ten chiefs, instead of being released, as the Cheyennes expected, were kept in custody and brought up to Ft. Hays with Custer, where they were placed in the stockade, together with sixty-five Indian women and children who had been captured the December previous in the fight with Black Kettle, on the Wachita river. Black Kettle was killed in this engagement, but his sister, Wah-wis-sa, with her three year old child, was captured and kept in the stockade at Hays. Some time during the summer of 1869 the captive chiefs made an attempt at escape, in which they fought with such courage that three of the soldiers on guard were killed, but in return all of the chiefs received mortal wounds from the rifles of the soldiers who were near to succor the guards.

In this hopeless attempt made by the chiefs, Black Kettle's sister was also killed under very distressing circumstances. Ever since the day of her capture she seemed contented to remain with the whites; she was permitted to return to her people, her child having been kept, however, at the fort; but after a time she was offered her liberty, together with that of her child. Instead of going back to her tribe she declared her desire to live always with the white people, who treated her

much better than the Indians of her own tribe. When the chiefs broke out of the stockade and rushed on their guards this woman became so connected with the struggle that, under an apprehension that she was trying to assist the Indians, one of the soldiers shot her in the side fatally. She lived some hours after the shooting, and being conscious up to the moment of her death, she explained that, instead of helping the chiefs, she was trying to take a knife from one of them, and had not the fatal bullet struck her she would have saved the life of one of the guards who was stabbed with the knife which the chief drew from her relaxing grasp.

In 1870 Capt. Payne removed to Sedgwick county, Kansas, near Wichita, and the following year was chosen to represent that district in the Legislature. While serving in the session of 1871-72, through his influence Sedgwick county was divided and a new county formed of the northern part, which was called Harvey. In the redistricting of Sedgwick county one of its largest townships was named in his honor, "Payne," in which he now makes his home, owning a large ranche about ten miles northeast of Wichita.

In the year 1879 Capt. Payne became interested in a movement for the occupation and settlement of a district in the Indian Territory, which is known as Oklahoma (beautiful land). This central spot in that beautiful country comprises one hundred thousand acres of the finest land on the American continent. He claims the right of white settlement on these lands under a treaty made by the Government with the Indians in 1866, by which this district was ceded to the Government as a public domain, and was afterward surveyed and set apart as such.

Through Capt. Payne's personal endeavors a large col-

ony was organized for the purpose of entering upon and settling these lands. This colony moved early in December, 1880, and first assembled on the border of the In-



Col. Coppinger Visits the Camp.

THE NEW YORK  
ALBANY

dian Territory on Bitter Creek, and after organizing on a military basis, moved along the State line to Hunnewell, where they went into camp. The settlers were closely

followed by Federal cavalry under the command of Colonel Coppinger, who had previously warned the intending invaders that any attempt to enter the Indian Territory in the face of the President's proclamation would be forcibly resisted. At Hunnewell, where the cavalry occupied one side of a creek and the colonists the other, the latter remained in camp for two or three days, receiving a good many recruits from the dry region of Western Kansas, where the settlers have been literally starved out for some years past. On Sunday, the 12th, the camp was crowded during the day by the inhabitants of the surrounding country, who came to inspect the throng. During the afternoon, after a dress parade by the colonists, there was a religious service conducted by the colony chaplain. An invitation was extended to the officers of the Federal troops to unite in the service, and their acceptance occasioned great satisfaction. Seats were provided for the ladies, some forty or fifty in number, and the exercises opened with the grand national anthem, "America." The chaplain's text was from Exodus—the Lord's commandment to Pharaoh to let his people go and possess the promised land. The next song was :

"Hold the fort for we are coming,  
Oklahoma still."

In which hundreds of voices joined, and the religious exercises concluded with the rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner," three cheers for the flag, three more for the President, and a tiger for the Federal troops. It was a novel spectacle, and none seemed to enjoy it better than the officers of the army, who sat upon the anxious bench, sandwiched between the choir and the pilgrims. The stars and stripes were conspicuously displayed about the camp, while a number of the wagons were adorned with



the same colors. The wagon covers were nearly all inscribed with "On to Oklahoma!" "No Turning Back!" "Strike for Homes!" "Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a home in Oklahoma!" and similar devices. On Sunday night a colony meeting was held for conference as to their future course, but the only conclusion was to wait a day or two longer for some modification of the President's order, under which it would be possible for them to proceed.

The Secretary of the Interior, Carl Schurz, having held that these lands were purchased exclusively for the settlement of negroes or of Indians who would accept the civilizing influences of the nation, the President issued his proclamation forbidding white persons to enter upon these lands, and called upon the military to enforce the order.

Receiving no answer to their petition, which the colonists had forwarded to the President, and getting somewhat anxious, whilst many proposed entering the lands despite the military, on the 13th of December a meeting was held at which Dr. Robert Wilson, of Texas, was appointed a committee of one to go to Washington to see if something could not be done at once to relieve the critical situation on the border.

On the 14th the colonists broke camp and moved forward to Caldwell, Kansas. Before starting the chaplain offered up a prayer for the success of the undertaking, in carrying the gospel and civilization to this hitherto barbarous and benighted land. At Caldwell, where five wagons and twenty men joined the column, the Mayor and a long procession of citizens came out to meet the colonists and escorted them through the streets, women waving handkerchiefs and men cheering. The cavalry moved along with the settlers without interfering

with their progress. The day following, at a mass meeting of the citizens of Caldwell, resolutions were adopted indorsing the movement to settle the lands, and asking



Drilling the Colonists.

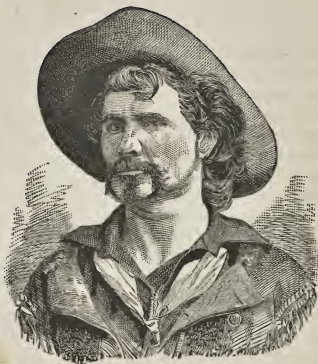
the President to order the troops to accompany the settlers to Oklahoma as an escort.

Being unable to accomplish anything, either through petition or by endeavoring to influence Congressional

legislation, the colonists became restless, and shortly afterward Capt. Payne, having been arrested by the U. S. authorities, charged with trespassing on Indian reservations, the colony disbanded temporarily.

The trial of Capt. Payne occurred at Ft. Smith, before U. S. District Judge Parker, on the 7th of March, 1881. He was represented by Judge Baker, of St. Louis, who argued at great length the character of the treaty of 1866. The question raised over Capt. Payne's arrest involves directly the nature and validity of that treaty, and hence a means is afforded for testing a point upon which the Secretary of the Interior and the ablest lawyers of the country are at variance, the latter holding that Oklahoma is a part of the public domain, and subject to pre-emption and settlement like all other public lands.

Personally, Capt. Payne is one of the most popular men on the Western frontier. He is a natural scout, born and indurated to the hardships of adventure and campaign service. His mother is a first cousin of the celebrated Davy Crockett, for whom he was named, and from whom he seems to have derived a character which has led him into a similar life. Unlike most heroes of the plains, Capt. Payne is a strictly temperate man, and is so far removed from the desperado and bravado that he is universally recognized as a dignified gentleman of no small talent in all the fields of labor where his services have been employed. He is in the very prime of life, of very large and powerful frame, with such a commanding presence, mild manners and agreeable deportment that he is by right esteemed as one of the most prominent men whose names are inseparably linked with the settlement of the West.



CAPT. JACK,  
(The Poet Scout.)

THE POET SCOUT

## A SKETCH OF CAPT. JACK, THE POET SCOUT.

---

CAPTAIN JOHN W. CRAWFORD, known to fame as Capt. Jack, the Poet Scout of the Black Hills, is a native of County Donegal, Ireland, where he was born in the year 1848, of prominent parents, his mother being a lineal descendant of Sir William Wallace. In 1852 the elder Crawford left Ireland for America, but shortly after his arrival in this country he fell into evil ways, and gave such license to a previously acquired appetite for strong drink that thenceforward he neglected all his duties as husband and father.

In 1856, however, Mrs. Crawford came over to America and joined her husband at Minersville, Pennsylvania, where he was prosecuting his trade as tailor with indifferent success. But a year of hard labor and economy enabled the mother to save sufficient from her scanty earnings to send for her children, four in number.

The following incident, which I have taken the liberty to copy from a prefatory life sketch of Capt. Jack, published in his recent book of poems, entitled, "The Poet Scout," will illustrate the disadvantages of his early youth, the incentive of his future actions, and the domestic sufferings of his beloved mother:

"It was at the close of a hard day's march during Custer's campaign on the Yellowstone, and the command had toiled through long miles of rough country, in the

midst of a rain storm such as is known only in the Rocky Mountains. The officers were seated around the camp-fire trying to extract some warmth from the smouldering buffalo chips, when one of them produced from his saddle-bags a canteen of whisky, and taking a long draught, with the remark, 'this is the soldier's best friend,' passed it to Captain Jack Crawford.

" 'Thank you, Captain, but I never drink.'

" 'Never drink !' responded the officer, 'why it is almost incredible ; you are the first man I ever met with on the plains who refused good liquor.'

" 'Yes, Jack,' said several of the others who were interested listeners to the conversation, 'tell us how it is you are so strict a temperance man.'

" 'That stuff you are drinking,' responded the scout, 'robbed me of a good father, made him forget his own flesh and blood, and changed him from a man to a brute. That is not my only reason. Years ago, when my poor mother was on her death-bed, she called me to her side, and holding out her thin white hand, asked me to promise in the presence of my brothers and sisters, and in the invisible presence of God, that my lips should never touch the destroyer. Gentlemen, I consider that that vow is registered in heaven, and I have kept it. I do not even know the taste of liquor. Is my reason satisfactory?'"

The misfortune which an ungovernable desire for strong drink invariably precipitates, so wrecked the Crawford family that at a very early age little Jack was compelled to contribute to the support of his mother with all the earnings his youthful and constant labors could create. His education was, in consequence, entirely neglected, and so little care was given to his instruction that not only was he never in a school-house, but at the age

of fifteen, when he left home to enter the Union army, there was not a single letter in the alphabet that he knew the name of.

In 1863 he enlisted as a private in the 48th Regiment of Pennsylvania Volunteers, serving under Gen. John F. Hartranft, who afterward became Governor of that State. At the battle of Spottsylvania Court House, May 12, 1864, Jack was in the front ranks that led a desperate charge on the enemy's works, in which he fell desperately wounded and was carried back to the field hospital. Some days after the battle he was sent to Washington, and transferred from there to the Saterlee Hospital in West Philadelphia. For many weeks he lay upon a bed of terrible suffering, but it chanced that he fell under the tender care of a Sister of Charity who nursed him into convalescence, and then began to give him lessons, first in the A B C's, and then led him along gradually until, under her tutelage, he learned to read and write. Having thus become possessed of the primary elements of an education, he continued in the acquisition of knowledge, unaided, and became at last fairly informed.

After recovering from his wound, Jack returned to his regiment, and remained in active service until the 2d of April, 1865, when he was again wounded, at Petersburg, Virginia, and had not recovered when the army disbanded at the close of the war.

In the latter part of 1865 Captain Jack's mother died, and being now alone in the world, and moved by a natural craving for adventure, he started West, bearing with him letters of warm recommendation from Gens. Hartranft and Sherman, which introduced him favorably to frontier army officers, and he soon after found congenial service in the Western camps.

He was one of the first white men to enter the Black

Hills, and became the founder of Custer City, Gayville, and Spearfish, in Dakotah, and was one of the original organizers that laid off the towns of Deadwood and Crook City.

In the Indian campaign of 1876 Capt. Jack was second in command of Gen. Crook's scouts, and superseded Buffalo Bill as chief on the 24th of August of the same year, Bill having resigned to reorganize his theatrical company for the season of 1876-77.

As a horseman and rider Capt. Jack is extraordinarily skillful, while as a scout and Indian fighter he has honestly earned great renown. Among his more celebrated rides may be mentioned one he accomplished in July, 1876, when in response to a telegram he rode from Medicine Bow, on the Union Pacific railroad, to the Rosebud and Little Big Horn, a distance of nearly four hundred miles in five days. This feat of wonderful speed and endurance was performed, too, through a country literally swarming with hostile Indians, several of whose camps and villages he was compelled to pass within pistol shot of.

On another occasion, being engaged as a special messenger for the New York *Herald*, whose special correspondent was with Gen. Crook's army, Capt. Jack carried an account of the battle of Slim Buttes to Ft. Laramie, a distance of three hundred and fifty miles, in less than four days. In accomplishing this unprecedented ride he passed five couriers and arrived more than five hours in advance of the fastest, but he killed two horses in making the journey, for which the *Herald* allowed him \$222.75, besides giving him \$500 for the service.

Capt. Jack's adventures have been numerous and thrilling, many of which he has related in verse, which he writes with terse fluency and rhythm. In 1873 he joined Buffalo Bill's troupe and played a leading part for



two seasons very satisfactorily, but he preferred the wild life of the far West and returned to his old home in Dakota.

During the late war, in 1879, Capt. Jack was employed as scout and trailer and was engaged in several of the hottest fights of that campaign. He was well acquainted with Chief Oura, whose friendly services he did much to secure and through whose influence with his people hostili-



Oura.

ties were brought to an early close, and the captive Meeker family restored to the whites. Oura's death occurred in 1880 on the Ute reservation. He was an able chief, progressive, intellectual, and ambitious to bring his tribe under the civilizing and elevating influence of the white people, for whom he ever cherished a warm and friendly feeling.

As a man Capt. Jack has always enjoyed the greatest popularity; he is a thorough gentleman, an excellent scout, good Indian fighter, and his morals have ever been regarded as phenomenal by the hardy and generally reckless characters of the frontier. His affection for Buffalo Bill approaches veneration, and more than half of his poetic effusions are dedicated to or founded upon some incident in Bill's life.

As a poet, Capt. Jack deserves the admiration of every one capable of appreciating poetic genius. Deprived of all the cultivating influences calculated to suggest the sentiment of verse, his own innate, self-created endowments made nature assert itself, and he has written poetry because this manner of expressing his thoughts and ideas was more natural to him than prose. There is no profound or æsthetic phraseology in his verses, but they abound in what is vastly superior: ennobling and sublime rhapsodies which reveal the God-given poetic gift beneath the uncultured exterior. His style most resembles that which distinguishes Bret Harte, which, though it is less elegantly rounded with rhetorical finish, nevertheless breathes a purer and loftier sentiment, and of a more divine creation than Sierra's poet can boast of.

H. Keller & Co., of San Francisco, issued an edition of Capt. Jack's poems in 1879, which bears the title, "The Poet Scout." The book comprises two hundred and eight pages, and is elaborately bound and printed on the finest book paper. The poems and stories which it contains—chiefly poetry—are all founded on some adventure of the author or his immediate friends. Some of these I have copied into "Heroes of the Plains," because they were peculiarly appropriate to the subject, and these may be taken as a sample by which to judge Capt. Jack's poetic abilities. He is still living, in the hey-day of life,

and at this date (July, 1881,) is mining in New Mexico. Whether as chief of scouts, town trustee of Custer City, chief of the Red Rangers, poet at the banquet table, author, actor, or "poorest man on the range," Capt. Jack is always the same good-natured, accommodating, generous and genial gentleman, with a true heart, and the spirit of devotion for his friends.



J. B. OMOHUNDRO.  
(Texas Jack.)

## SKETCH OF TEXAS JACK.

(JOHN B. OMOHUNDRO.)

---

JOHN B. OMOHUNDRO, more familiarly known by the title of "Texas Jack," was a native of West Virginia, but the exact date of his birth I have never been able to learn.

At the early age of seven years, he ran away from home and shipped as "general utility" boy on a sailing vessel bound for Australia. This voyage proved so delightful to the youthful adventurer that he remained at sea until he had developed into a seaman before the mast, in which service he visited nearly all the countries of the world, but in 1858 was wrecked off the coast of Texas, and after a hard struggle for life with the angry billows, was cast upon the shore near Corpus Christi.

After this rather "salty" experience, Jack resolved to remain a landsman until some desirable position should offer him for an easier life. He was not long idle, however, for occupation was readily found among the large cattle herders of Texas, which service soon introduced him to the wild life found only on the plains, and in which there was a congeniality and fascination peculiarly suited to his disposition. Strong, muscular, active and adventurous, Jack took to horseback riding with wonderful naturalness, and the pistol, knife, rifle and lasso came next to his hand by a process of gravitation which distinguishes the Texan cow-boy from the free rovers of

all other States. He therefore readily acquired great dexterity in the use of fire-arms, and became also an expert horseman, which proved to be of excellent service to him afterward.

Jack was employed on a ranche in the Texas pan-handle, near the border line of Indian Territory, where Indian cattle thieves were accustomed to make periodical depredations. On this ranche were also many head of horses, raised chiefly for herding purposes, and these animals required constant watchfulness from the herders to prevent them falling into the hands of covetous Indians. In fact, many cow-boys were murdered by these pests of the ranche, so that the business of herder had become extremely hazardous in the pan-handle section.

When Jack entered upon the dangerous duty of ranchman, he expected trouble with the Indians, and was, therefore, prepared for it. Nor was he in anywise surprised when, a few months after his engagement, a large body of the red skins came down upon him and his partner, with whoop and weapons, intent upon capturing the horses under Jack's charge. But the Indians were received with a cordiality little expected. Jack at once covered the rear, and while his partner drove the horses rapidly toward National Monument, Jack poured a deadly fire into the Indians, killing several, and thus checking pursuit. For this skillful and effective resistance he was well rewarded by the owner of the stock. Afterward Jack made several cattle drives to Abilene, and became one of Texas' most renowned rancheros.

When the great civil war was declared, and there was a mustering of Southern forces through the Southwest, Jack proffered his services to Gen. Floyd, by whom he was at once made "headquarters courier," and directly thereafter was promoted to chief of scouts under the cel-

Jack Holding the Indians at Bay.



celebrated cavalry Colonel, J. B. Stuart. He served in this capacity for several years, and became noted throughout the Confederacy.

At the close of hostilities Jack was employed as guide between the Colorado and Rio Grande rivers, and after pursuing this calling for several months made an extended tour through Kansas and Nebraska for the purpose of so familiarizing himself with the country that he could competently guide parties through those territories (now States).

In 1872 Jack was engaged as scout for the Government and in the following summer had charge of four hundred Pawnees who were engaged to operate against the Cheyennes. It was while thus employed that he made the acquaintance of Buffalo Bill, with whom he scouted a considerable time and until the two became partners in an enterprise conceived by Ned Buntline, as detailed in the "Life of Buffalo Bill."

While Gen. Sheridan was organizing his campaign against the Northern Cheyennes, Jack was employed as hunter for the army, in which capacity he developed remarkable skill in killing antelope, which abounded on the prairies of Western Kansas at that time. The method employed for killing this most wary and fleet of North American game is well portrayed in the accompanying engraving. The killing of antelope is not so exciting as that of buffalo hunting, but it requires great caution and has much of genuine sport in it.

During the Cheyenne war, and at the time of Custer's death, Jack was employed by the New York *Herald* to carry dispatches from the scene of hostilities to the nearest points for transmission, and performed these duties with such satisfaction that he received many flattering notices of praise from that paper.





Flagging Antelope.

In the early part of 1880 Jack's health became much impaired, and he went to Colorado with the hope of benefitting his physical condition and also his fortune, as the Leadville gold and silver discoveries were then promising large returns for small investments of capital and labor. But his anticipations were never realized, for in May he was attacked by pneumonia, a disease of great prevalence in the rarified atmosphere of that high altitude, and in June following he died. His wife, who is known on the stage as M'lle Morlacchi, was with him during his illness and nursed him with all the care and tender attention that a devoted wife could give.

Texas Jack was a true exponent of Western civilization : courageous, true to his friends, unfaltering in the line of duty and resolute under all circumstances. His grave is among those whose adventurous spirits led them to the auriferous fields of Leadville only to lay down their hopes and burdens beside the still waters and peaceful fields of death ; but it is kept green by friendly hands, while his name is ever fresh in the memory of companions who cherish the traits of his noble manhood.

